



AUCKLAND SCHOOLS DEBATING

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2012 Coaching Handbook



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A LETTER TO OUR COACHES

Coaching a team in the ASD Competition can be an extremely rewarding role: the skills your team learns will help develop them into more thoughtful, articulate and balanced individuals.

The ASD Committee greatly appreciates the efforts of coaches, and we recognize that the competition could not function without you.

As a rule, coaches in this competition have three roles to fulfil:

- Managing the team (this includes ensuring that the team is in the right place at the right time and contacting the Committee if problems arise or if defaults are unavoidable).
- Helping develop team members into better debaters.
- Adjudicating debates (if the coach has a team in the Junior or Senior Open grades).

These roles are equally important and this guide is divided into sections according to each. It contains comprehensive information on what is expected. If in doubt, please refer to this guide. If this guide fails to answer your query, please contact the Committee.

The Committee asks all coaches to take the time to read this guide at the start of the year, and we will assume you have done so in our dealings with you.

Even if you have coached for us before, there have been a number of changes made in preparation for 2012, so we ask that you still read the guide.

The guide is not short; rather, it is comprehensive. It was produced at the request of coaches who desired something more substantive and reliable. The thirty minutes or so it will take to read through at the start of the year will hopefully ensure a smoother, less stressful competition for all teachers, students and the Committee.

Many thanks for your commitment to making this competition a success,

The ASD Committee



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THE 2012 ASD COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Stephanie Thompson

2012 will be Stephanie's fourth year on the ASD Committee. Stephanie began debating at school, reaching the National Final of the Schools Debating Championships, but has continued to excel as a debater at university, where she studies Law and Arts. She has broken at all the major national and international tournaments, has reached the Grand Final of the Australasian Intervarsity Debating Championships, and been named in the top 10 speakers in Australasia. In 2011, Stephanie was the President of the Auckland University Debating Society and the Secretary of the New Zealand Universities Debating Council. This year, she will continue as convener of Auckland Regionals and coach of the Auckland Schools Team.

Treasurer and Premier Junior Convener: Glen Holm-Hansen

Glen continues his involvement on the ASD executive in 2012 after extensive involvement in both the schools and university debating communities. After debating at school, Glen competed at university in every major national and international tournament for the University of Auckland Debating Society's top teams. He has extensive adjudicating experience – at university and schools levels – and has been a Chief Adjudicator at several tournaments. Glen was a coach of the Auckland Regional team in 2011. Since completing his degrees Glen has been practicing as a solicitor at prestigious Auckland law firm Simpson Grierson.

Secretary and Premier Advanced Convener: Sam Bookman

Sam has a long history of involvement in debating. He was part of Auckland Schools Regional teams in 2006 and 2007, where he reached the Russell McVeagh National Competition final and was named first reserve for the New Zealand Schools Team. Since continuing debating at university, where he is studying a conjoint Law and Arts degree, Sam has represented Auckland University at a number of tournaments, and has broken to the finals rounds of Australs. ASD is very fortunate to have Sam back for a third year and convening its most competitive grade.

Advanced Open Convener: Hamish Saunders

Hamish is extremely familiar with the ASD competition, having debated in it at every level to considerable success. He has been a finalist in the Premier Advanced Grade and was named a reserve to the Auckland Impromptu Cup team in 2009. Hamish was also a finalist at the Russell McVeagh Auckland Regional Championships. His debating successes have continued at university, where he is currently completing a Law and Arts conjoint degree, majoring in History and Political Studies. He has debated at multiple international and domestic tournaments for Auckland University.

Senior Open Convenor: To Be Confirmed

Junior Open Convener: Corinne Marti

Corinne will be in her second year at the University of Auckland in 2011. While at school, she represented Northland on the regional team for three years in a row at the National Schools Debating Championships, and won the Northland Regional Championships. Corinne also has experience in coaching schools teams and is very much looking forward to being next year's Senior Open Convenor. In 2012, as well as



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being on the ASD Committee, Corinne will sit on the University of Auckland Debating Society Executive, and no doubt continue her successes as one of the most qualified adjudicators at Auckland.

Anne Rodgers

Anne has been very involved with ASD since its inception, and has generously hosted the Advanced Open grade for a number of years. Anne coaches and runs debating at St Cuthbert's, and her Premier Advanced teams in particular have been very successful – they won the competition in 2010. St Cuthbert's students are also often selected as members of the Auckland Regional team. In 2012, Anne will assist with the Advanced Open grade, as well as voicing the concerns of schools when committee decisions are made.

Joelle Hartley

Joelle has been teaching at Rosmini College since 2007. She is currently the Assistant HOD of the English Department and TIC of Debating. Joelle has five years experience to date as coach and manager of three to four debating teams each year and has adjudicated a number of Junior and Senior Open Grade debates over this time. Her Rosmini teams also participate in the Russell McVeagh Impromptu Cup, The Pompallier Shield Debating Competition, Model United Nations Association and the ASD Winter Champs. Joelle will bring a schools' perspective to the planning of the competition this year.



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CONTACTING ASD

CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: info@aucklandschoolsdebating.org.nz

Website: www.aucklandschoolsdebating.org.nz

Post: ASD, P.O. Box 109025, Newmarket, Auckland, 1149.

PLEASE NOTE:

The Committee can be contacted via email or post.

The preferred means of contact is email.

If you are defaulting a debate you must inform us of the default before 12pm on the day of the debate via email. You must notify us via **phone and email** if defaulting after 12pm. Notifying your team's opposition is not sufficient – it is crucial that you also notify the Committee.

While the turnaround on most email queries is less than 24 hours, the Committee does not undertake to reply any faster than 72 hours. This is because all Committee members are volunteers with extensive outside commitments. In light of this, please contact us as soon as possible whenever you have a query.

If we know about a problem **before** a debate occurs it is possible we can help find a way around it that suits both teams. If we become aware of problems **after** a debate it is far less likely we can reach satisfy everyone involved.



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ROLE ONE: MANAGING THE TEAM

DUTIES OF THE COACH

ENSURE THE COMMITTEE CAN CONTACT YOU:

Effectively managing the team starts by ensuring that the Committee has all the necessary information required to contact you. After the team entry process has been complete (your school debating co-ordinator will complete this) the Committee will ask for information relating to each team. Please ensure that you provide all the information requested, including:

- Your name as team coach
- The team which you are coaching
- Your email address
- A phone number (preferably a mobile phone) that you can be reached on in the event of last minute defaults against your team

These details ensure you and your team are aware of any notices made available by the Committee.

KNOW THE RULES:

The rules are attached to this document. Please read them and know them. Where your team breaches one of the rules it is possible they may lose a debate by default.

In particular, please be familiar with the rules around which speakers may (and which speakers may **not**) debate for your team.

MAKE SURE YOUR TEAM SHOWS UP:

Keep in touch with your team and if possible have contact numbers for them; especially if they come to the venue separately.

Where your team is going to default, please let the Committee know as per our rules.



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WHO CAN SPEAK FOR MY TEAM?

Maximum speaker limit:

In the Premier Grades a team may **not** use more than five speakers throughout the competition. In the Open Grades that maximum number is seven speakers.

If a team uses a speaker over this limit they will **lose** that debate by default and the **other team will receive the 'win point'**. The debate **can** still go ahead and the adjudicator will give a normal adjudication, but for scoring purposes the team will not gain a 'point' even if they win.

'Borrowing' or 'sharing' speakers between more than one team:

If a team cannot field three debaters it is possible to 'borrow' a debater from another team from the same school under the following conditions:

- A team may only 'borrow' another speaker **once** during the competition (so if Team A has to borrow 'Sam' from Team B in round three they cannot borrow anyone else in the later rounds).
- An individual speaker may only **be borrowed** by **one** other team during the competition (so if 'Sam' is from Team A and is later borrowed by Team B he cannot later be borrowed by Team C under any circumstances).
- A speaker can only be 'borrowed' from **same grade** or a **lower ranked grade**. For the purpose of this condition the ranking of grades is:
 - Advanced Premier
 - Advanced Open
 - Premier Junior
 - Senior Open
 - Junior Open

Apart from these rules, a speaker may only speak for **one** team during the competition.

How do we determine who the 'official' speakers for a team are?

The first five (or seven depending on grade) speakers to appear on the marksheets will be deemed the 'official speakers' for that team.

Speaking in Octo/Quarter/Semi/Grand Finals

To be eligible to speak for a team in the 'finals series' a speaker must have spoken for that team at **least twice** during the preliminary rounds. The Committee will advise which speakers are eligible to participate in the finals series following the announcement of those teams who have qualified for the final series.



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Why we have speaker restrictions

At its core ASD is designed to be a competitive debating tournament. Winning teams receive prizes of value and the prestige attached to winning team is often influential in speakers receiving awards, sports colours or prefect responsibilities within their school. Similarly a number of external scholarships look favourably on speakers who excel at debating.

With this in mind the Committee strives to ensure the fairest playing field possible so that those teams genuinely wishing to compete are able to do so in an equitable manner.

In previous competitions where 'speaker eligibility' was not enforced schools often tactically used their best speakers to float between teams in the same grade (and even different grades) in order to disproportionately affect the number of wins their school received. Likewise the teams that eventually went on to compete in quarter and semi finals and so forth did not always reflect the teams who competed in the preliminary series of debates.

What to do if you get stuck:

The committee does recognize that some schools are not as heavily competitive and often have difficulty predicting at the start of the year which students will continue with debating. This difficulty has often resulted in schools entering seven or more speakers under a single team. It is for this reason the committee allows the **'fun debate'** option if you cannot field three eligible speakers.

What this means is that if three speakers show up (eligible or not) a debate will always go ahead and the result will be delivered as normal so students know how they fared and where to improve.

However, the committee treats the result of a 'fun debate' as a default for the purposes of working out who continues into the quarter/semi finals. We feel this strikes the right balance between maintaining the integrity of the competition and allowing students to benefit from the debating experience.



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HOW DEFAULTS WORK

If a team does not have three eligible speakers at the debate or is not ready to begin a **prepared debate** after 15 minutes of the scheduled starting time has elapsed it forfeits the debate and the other team may claim a win by default.

If a team does not have three eligible speakers at the debate or is not ready to begin an **advised topic or impromptu debate** 15 minutes **before** the debate is due to start (i.e. 45 minutes after the topic is announced) and NOT 15 minutes after the topic is announced.

Where a team can field three speakers but they include ineligible speakers the debate will still go ahead and a normal adjudication will be given, however for scoring purposes that team will be recorded as having defaulted the debate.

If a default cannot be avoided, the debating co-ordinator at the school of the defaulting team must email ASD as soon as possible before the start of the debate evening.

This should include an account of the situation, the number of members of the defaulting team, an explanation as to why the default was unavoidable and why the situation that arose could not be foreseen.

The defaulting team should make a best effort to contact the opposing team to notify them of the default also.

A team that defaults without notifying the Committee as described above, for whatever reason, will be automatically withdrawn from the competition. A team that defaults twice, with or without notice, will be automatically withdrawn from the competition.

A withdrawal can be appealed to the Committee (as outlined below) but the team's reinstatement will be at the discretion of the Committee. See our rules for further detail.



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HOW TO MOVE A DEBATE TO THE CATCH-UP ROUND

Where a debate evening clashes with an unavoidable commitment a team has two options: to default the debate or move it to the Catch-Up Round.

The Catch-Up Round takes place in a fixed location on a fixed date like any other round.

The Committee does **not** allow teams to schedule their own private rematches or catch-up debates because of problems with venues, adjudicator quality, impromptu moots and various other complaints received in the past.

Schools wanting to delay a debate to the Catch-Up Round must contact the Committee as soon as possible before the start of the debate evening. The procedure for delaying a debate to the Catch-Up Round is as follows:

- Notify the Committee by email as soon as you become aware that you wish to delay a debate to the catch up round.
- If you elect to take this option you accept the risk that:
 - It may take up to **72 hours** for the Committee to receive and forward on your request to the opposition.
 - It may take **further time** for the opposition to receive and reply to the request.
 - It may take **further time** for the Committee to receive their reply and forward it back to you.
- Up to the point where you receive confirmation of the delay to the Catch Up Round your team should expect to either be present at the debate or risk a default.
- If the other school cannot (or does not want to) delay the debate to the Catch-Up Round, you have to default.
- No team can have more than one debate in the catch-up round. There is no obligation on schools to accept an offer of delaying a debate.



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COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The ASD Committee always endeavours, in good faith, to provide the best and fairest competition possible. As is inevitable in a competition of this size and complexity, sometimes mistakes can occur or decisions can be made that you disagree with.

ASD is committed to providing a fair, transparent and effective mechanism for dealing with those situations when they arise. As provided for in our Constitution and Rules, the following processes shall apply.

The Complaints Procedure

In the ordinary course of the competition people working for ASD will make a number of decisions. From time to time these may be made by individual Committee members, the Committee as a collective or by agents of the Committee like Host-School Coordinators.

Any decision may be **formally appealed** to a full sitting of the ASD Committee, although certain types of decisions are more likely to be amenable to appeal than others (discussed below).

Because the Committee receives many queries everyday a normal question, email or phone call will **not** be considered a formal appeal and you should continue to enquire as normal whenever you have concerns.

If you do wish to have a decision formally considered by a full Committee we ask that you email us providing full details of the complaint.

What Happens Next?

When we receive a complaint we'll get in touch within 72 hours to let you know we received it and to give you an estimate of when you can expect a formal and substantive reply. Because complaints will be considered by the entire Committee the amount of time required to process your complaint will vary; sometimes we will be prompt, sometimes that will not be practical.

The Committee will discuss the grounds of the appeal and each member will then have a final vote on the matter. The view taken by the majority of the Committee will prevail. Where Committee members have a conflict in a particular decision they will abstain from voting. Where a vote has tied there will be further discussion and a second vote. Where that vote is tied the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

After that we will inform you of the decision of the Committee and our reasons for that decision. Where your complaint is upheld the Committee may, at their discretion, take further action. This may include:

- Granting an exception to one of our rules; or
- Formally changing our rules to prevent a similar problem arising in future; or



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- Refunding, or partially refunding, a team's entry fee; or
- Awarding a team a 'win point'; or
- Taking any other action it deems appropriate; or
- Doing nothing

Complaining About a Debate Decision

If you are unhappy with the decision given in a particular debate this will fall into one of three categories.

1) **The merits of the case.**

The Committee will **never** hear appeals on the merits of one team's case versus the other. Debating is a subjective activity and it would be impractical and unfair for the Committee to begin questioning decisions having not been present at the debate. Debating is about persuasion and the adjudicator's decision is final. So complaints about a team who had 'better points', 'better criteria', 'more humour' or 'more facts' will not be heard.

2) **A serious breach of the rules has occurred.**

If a team has used a speaker too old for that grade, has communicated with people outside the preparation room or another similar rule breach has occurred the Committee **may** overturn the decision in a debate. For this purpose, minor breaches such as speaking over the warning bells or offering a point of information at the wrong time will **not** be sufficient.

3) **The quality of the adjudicator.**

If you strongly feel the adjudication was 'incorrect' this is a complaint that goes to the competency of the adjudicator. Although we will never overturn a decision we **will** consider such complaints and we **may**:

- Discipline the adjudicator; or
- Retrain the adjudicator; or
- Withdraw that adjudicator from our pool of adjudicators

Please note that because the Junior and Senior Open grades rely on teachers adjudicating we will not withdraw coaches from that pool of adjudicators but rather will opt for re-training or other action. In the grades where we provide external adjudicators it is more likely an adjudicator may not be used in future.

Complaints on Other Matters



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It is perhaps unhelpful to list the possible decisions amenable to complaint that may arise. Rather the Committee will consider **all** complaints that it receives. In doing so it will have regard to the following matters:

- The seriousness of what has occurred; and
- The consequences for all teams in the competition; and
- General principles of fairness; and
- The relative fault of all parties; and
- How a decision may set a precedent for the future; and
- How similar situations have been dealt with in the past



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STYLE OF DEBATES: PREPARED ROUNDS, ADVISED SUBJECT ROUNDS AND IMPROMPTU ROUNDS

ASD promotes three styles of debating: prepared debates, advised subject debates and impromptu debates.

Prepared Rounds:

In a prepared round the moot and sides are announced in advance (at least a week in advance for preliminary rounds). Teams are encouraged to research and prepare their case but to also rebut the case of the opposition team.

Moots will be advised via our website and via an email to coaches that have supplied their contact details.

Prepared rounds are more common at younger levels but often lead to debates filled with 'prepared speeches' rather than two teams engaging with each other, this has led to the introduction of the advised subject style discussed below.

Advised Subject Rounds:

In this style of debating we will announce (at least a week in advance) the **general topic** of that round. However the final moot (and sides) will not be announced until one hour before the start of the debate. Teams use that one hour to finalize their case.

For example:

- Seven days before Senior Open Round Two we announce that the debate will be about 'animal rights'.
- An hour before the debate is scheduled to start we will announce the moot and sides. It could be:
 - This house would impose harsher penalties on animal abusers. Or;
 - This house would ban the factory farming of chickens. Or;
 - This house would ban animal testing.

The advised subject will generally be specific enough to allow teams to undertake useful research but be wide enough to allow a few possible moots to be announced. This style of debating makes impromptu debates more approachable for younger debaters without resulting in the 'prepared speeches' scenario.

If there are any questions about this style please contact the Committee.

Impromptu Rounds:

In an impromptu round the moot and sides will be announced at the venue an hour before the debate is scheduled to start.



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WHEN TO ARRIVE

Junior Open:

Prepared Debates start at 4:30pm or 5:30pm. Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.

Advised Subject and Impromptu Debates start at 5:30pm or 6:30pm. Topics and sides will be announced one hour **before** these times (at 4:30pm and 5:30pm respectively). Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.

Senior Open:

Prepared Debates start at 4:30pm or 5:45pm. Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.

Advised Subject and Impromptu Debates start at 5:30pm or 6:45pm. Topics and sides will be announced one hour **before** these times (at 4:30pm and 5:45pm respectively). Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.

Advanced Open:

Advised Subject and Impromptu Debates start at 6:30pm or 8:00pm. Topics and sides will be announced one hour **before** these times (at 5:30pm and 7:00pm respectively). Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.

Junior Premier:

Advised Subject and Impromptu Debates start at 6:30pm or 8:00pm. Topics and sides will be announced one hour **before** these times (at 5:30pm and 7:00pm respectively). Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.

Advanced Premier:

Advised Subject and Impromptu Debates start at 6:30pm or 8:00pm. Topics and sides will be announced one hour **before** these times (at 5:30pm and 7:00pm respectively). Check the draw for your specific time and aim to be 15 minutes early.



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HOW WE DETERMINE THE BREAK

The term 'break' means working out which teams from the preliminary rounds will be invited to compete in the finals series.

The term 'bracket' indicates a group of teams that have already broken but are ranked equally ie. Teams A, B, C and D – all with 3 wins and 17 draw strength points - would be considered a bracket.

The chart below sets out the steps involved in determining the break.

How many wins does a team have?

- Teams are initially ranked according to the number of wins that they each have.

Who Beat Who?

- The who-beat-who method only works if ALL teams in a bracket can be worked out this way ie. Team A beat Team C who beat Team B.

Draw Strength

- Draw strength is the total strength of teams faced - both teams won against and lost to.
- For example, Team A beats Team B (who has only won 1 debate). Team A loses to Team C (who has won 4 debates). Team A's draw strength is 5.

Speaker Points

- Speaker points are the total number of speaker points a team has been awarded across the duration of the competition.
- Speaker points are only used to determine the break in grades where external adjudicators are used (Advanced Open, Premier Junior, and Premier Advanced). This is because ASD's external adjudicators undergo rigorous training prior to accrediting to adjudicate these grades. ASD is fortunate to have a pool of highly qualified adjudicators.

How do you work out the difference between teams who have the same number of wins and same draw strength points (and speaker points where applicable)?

- Step 1: Who-beat-who.**
- Step 2: Defaults.** This can only be used where there are two teams in a bracket and one team has one of their wins by default and the other does not. **Defaults are NOT used to determine if a team breaks or not - only their position within a bracket.**



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- **Step 3: Randomising function.** The randomising function on the draw programme will randomly order 3 or more teams in a bracket and so put them into their respective break positions.
- **Step 4: Coin toss.** If there are two teams in a bracket and neither one has won by default there will be a coin toss to decide if a team breaks first or second.

Note that the method for working out the break is not the same in all grades.

In Junior and Senior Open the break is worked out according to the diagram above. In Advanced Open, Premier Advanced and Premier Junior, there are two additional steps before Draw Strength: The total number of speaker points each team has received, then who beat who. Then Draw Strength and the four-step process follows.

Will a team from every zone in the Junior Open and Senior Open grades make it?

YES.

If the break is completed and no team from one zone is represented we will substitute a team from the final bracket for a team from the zone without representation. One team is guaranteed to break from each zone.

This is not because smaller zones have teams who are not good enough to make the break but rather that the smaller zones have a more limited chance to accrue draw strength points. With a limited number of teams and the rule that you can meet a team only once, the likelihood of meeting a much lower ranked team is higher in a small zone.

How will this occur?

If Team A, B and C have 4 wins and 8 draw strength points and are positioned 14, 15 and 16 on the break. They have been separated using the randomizing function on the draw program. BUT, no team from the Northern zone is represented. The next highest Northern team has 4 wins and 6 draw strength points. In order to substitute the Northern team in, the team who was randomly allocated to position 16, Team C, will miss out on the break.

Why are speaker points not used?

Although speaker points might ordinarily be a mechanism by which to break competing teams the guidelines for marking and not always followed in the Junior and Senior Open grades. When this happens the marks differ wildly and it would be unfair to penalize teams or unfairly reward teams for the adjudicators they are allocated.

Please note that the break is calculated by the computer program, then double checked by hand by two Exec members to make certain the outcome is correct.



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ROLE TWO: COACHING THE TEAM

We have included within this document the 'How to Debate' guide that we make available to debaters, which you may wish to read as well if you are new to debating.

Finally, we have collected a few tips from experienced coaches and present those for you below:

The Goal of Coaching Sessions

Debating can lead to the development of excellent skills for students, including increased ability to formulate and present arguments, public speaking skills, quick reflexive thinking and increased general knowledge.

It is better to try and develop these skills in students rather than prepare them for specific debates. There are two reasons for this:

- They will be better debaters (especially in impromptu debates).
- They will gain these broadly useful skills that have practical application outside of debates.

Not every student will be able to be an excellent debater. However, any student who debates is able to gain or improve on these excellent skills through coaching.

Overall: It is better to coach students so that they develop these skills rather than to coach them to win specific debates. The skills will help them win debates, but simply practicing on a few debating topics will not fully develop the skills.

Getting the Most Out of Your Team

- Make sure practice sessions are regular and structured.
- Be aware that different students will require different input to achieve their potential. Often overconfident people will need to be toned down a little, while shy people will require exactly the opposite.
- Take notes during debates/practice activities and give the individuals and team feedback on what you observed.
- Encourage the team to speak to the adjudicator afterward to give them individual feedback and to explain the decision (especially if it went against them). A team will often follow a coach who storms out of a room after a debate. This will not help the team improve.
- Keep practice sessions and debates an enjoyable experience. If the students are not enjoying themselves, they will stop debating.
- No matter what their age, encourage the students to speak and debate in an impromptu manner. Developing impromptu speaking and thinking skills takes



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practice: the more the better. Practices are the ideal opportunity for them to build up confidence in speaking and thinking on their feet.

- Do not have a student only practice at one position. Any speaker position in a debate requires basically the same skills. People who usually speak 1st affirmative need to be able to rebut, and 3rd speakers should know how to set up cases.

Some Practice Suggestions

These are some of the techniques used by regional, national and international coaches. They are designed around the philosophy that the best thing a coach can do is get the students thinking for themselves.

Impromptu Speaking:

Give the student a topic, and then a limited amount of time to think about it/write something. Then have them give a speech on the topic. Increase time of speech and lessen time for preparation as the student develops. Topics need not be 'debating related', in fact when starting off it is best to use topics they are easily able to talk about (music, sports, family etc). Some suggested starting off times are:

Junior: 10min prep/1-2min speech.

Senior: 9min prep/3min speech.

Advanced: 8min prep/4min speech.

Rolling Affirmatives:

This is a good feedback exercise. Give each speaker a topic, and 10-15 minutes to prepare a first affirmative on it. Then have them give the first affirmative speech while the others are preparing (you will need to stagger starting times). When the speech is finished you can give individual feedback while the others are still preparing their speeches. This continues in a looping manner.

Rolling Debate:

Another excellent feedback exercise. One person prepares a first affirmative. He or she then delivers the first affirmative while another person listens and the third person prepares a first affirmative on a different topic (this person can be sent out of the room to do this). The person who was listening to the first affirmative then gives a first negative response to the affirmative they have just heard. You can give some time between the speeches to give individual feedback. This continues in a looping manner. Rolling debates are helpful as a means of creating a series of debates with only three speakers and as a way of giving one-on-one feedback.

Team Case Preparation:



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Give the team a topic and have them prepare it as though it was a limited preparation debate. You can tone down your level of intervention in the preparation session as the team gets more confident and skilled.

Rebuttal/Surrebuttal, or Rebuttal Roulette:

Give the students 5 minutes to consider a topic after which randomly select one student to present one argument, supported by an example, affirming the moot for 2-3 minutes. Then randomly select a different student to rebut that particular argument and example for 2-3 minutes. Then randomly select a third student to offer rebuttal of the second student while still sticking to the original argument and example. This can be continued for as many people as you have in the group. The purpose of the exercise is to force debaters to engage with an example and re-interpret it and develop the rebuttal, combating the tendency to trade examples or simply re-state an earlier proposition.

General Knowledge Development:

Ask each student to do some research into a different issue (e.g., banning cars from central Auckland, use of biofuels, etc.) which he/she will discuss with the group for 5-10 minutes at the next practice session. This will ensure a good coverage of key issues and help the students get to grips with these topics.

Other Coaching Strategies

Manner

The biggest manner problem for most young debaters is that they are too dependent on cards. Most are unwilling to stand up unless they have their complete speech written out.

To overcome this in training, give the team members topics which they know a lot about – their family, their last holiday, something on TV – and tell them they cannot learn the speech off by heart, can only use four cards with a maximum of three words on each and have twenty minutes to prepare it.

This allows the debater to get into the habit of using cards as a cue only, in a way less threatening than in a full debate.

Other manner points to make:

- Encourage eye contact with the audience.
- Encourage voice variation. Reading aloud and taping can assist their development of this skill.

Matter

There is no magic recipe for good matter. Good matter requires understanding how to argue and having the general knowledge to flesh out those arguments. The best way to develop both these skills is to read. Newspaper opinion columns are particularly good as



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they have facts and are presented in the form of an argument. Areas that often come up include the environment, the economy and foreign affairs. Giving the debaters reading that they will find interesting will develop not only their debating but should also assist their school work.

A method of proof that is clear and well regarded to is:

1. Make the assertion;
2. Give the explanation — the argument;
3. Support the argument and thus clarify the assertion by example, e.g. statistics and recent events.
4. Link the point back to the team line.

Rebuttal

Rebuttal is the most difficult skill in debating to develop. As a coach it is best to simplify the job for them in training so it is less daunting than in a real debate. In training give the team a simple argument backed up by one example, then give them ten minutes to come up with rebuttal. After they have presented their response, give them other possible lines of rebuttal if they missed any. This technique can be used on topics the team will debate in the competition.

Method

Explain the importance of speaking to time as closely as possible. If the speech is short, they should reiterate; if it is too long, less important points should be dropped. Encourage signposting in a speech. That is:

- Before a summary a speaker can say "So what has my team shown you?"
- Before matter "Now on to my material"
- Before rebuttal "Let's examine some of the problems with the opposition's case"

Obviously the exact words are not important; what is important is that the audience get cues so they know how the speech is developing.

Small speeches focusing on particular skills like defining, rebutting, summarising, etc., as well as prescribing reading, probably makes the most effective use of training time.



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ASD COACHING SESSIONS

ASD offers coaching sessions to schools who are interested. These cost \$60 per session. If you are interested in receiving a coaching session, which is conducted by one of the ASD adjudicators over a period of 2-3 hours, please email the Committee. A mutually convenient time for the coaching session can then be arranged.

Many coaching scholarships are available for schools that do not have the financial ability to fund these coaching sessions. Please indicate in your application for a coaching session whether your school would like to apply for a coaching scholarship.



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ROLE THREE: ADJUDICATING DEBATES

INTRODUCTION

As a coach of a team you will be required to adjudicate debates in the Junior and Senior Open grade.

This role is a **requirement** of coaching a team and **not** an option.

While we appreciate that some coaches may initially feel overwhelmed by adjudicating, the competition is so large that logistically, we need coaches to help in these grades. In order to ensure everyone is dealt with equally, we need everyone to pitch in.

If you are allocated to adjudicate in a round this will be posted as part of the draw. It is your responsibility to check the draw each round to see if you are rostered to adjudicate.

If you are unable to adjudicate it is **your** responsibility to arrange a replacement adjudicator (preferably from within your own school).

Where you fail to fulfil a rostered duty the team that you coach will be regarded as having defaulted their debate.

Although this approach may seem heavy handed, it has been necessitated by a small number of coaches failing to adjudicate without explanation; the Committee hopes never to have to exercise that rule.

Please do not consider that if you deliberately fail as an adjudicator to follow the adjudicating guide you will be removed from adjudication responsibilities. To reiterate, this competition requires the participation of all teachers to work successfully.

As mentioned earlier, the Committee is appreciative of all coaches who help the competition take place by adjudicating debates.



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HOW TO DETERMINE THE WINNER

One of the most common queries we have from new coaches is how to determine the winner a debate.

The rule of thumb however in these grades is that **the team who was more convincing is the team who should win.**

We present below five simple rules to help you in reaching a decision; a holistic approach will be enough for any coach to fulfil their duties in this competition.

If schools wish to extend debaters of this age to a higher and more technical level of debating they should enter those debaters in the 'Premier Junior' grade where they will be exposed to experienced external adjudicators who will begin to develop these skills in speakers.

RULE 1: Do NOT add up the marks to see who won

By the end of the debate, you should be able to decide which team was better on the day without referring to the marks. This is the team who wins the debate and the mark-sheet should reflect this fact.

In other words, your final opinion of the debate determines the mark-sheet and not the other way around. If you are adding up individual speaker scores to see who won, you're doing it wrong.

With that in mind, it's acceptable to keep a rough copy of the marks on a separate piece of paper and transpose them to the mark-sheet after the debate but before you deliver the result.

RULE 2: If in doubt, follow your instincts!

The main role of a team is to convince you of their side of the topic. At the end of the debate the team that you intuitively think has been more convincing is probably the team who deserves to win..

A holistic, contextual approach, weighing all the factors is preferable to a prescriptive, mechanical approach to debates.

RULE 3: Techniques like 'models' and 'criteria' are helpful but not required!

As debaters gain more experience and reach higher levels they will introduce tools such as 'criteria' and 'models'. Likewise teams have specific roles (the affirmative team defines the moot for example) and speakers within teams have specific roles (the third speaker has the most rebuttal).

An oft-heard comment from teams is: "You didn't have any criteria/an onus/a yardstick/another buzzword/concept and so you will lose/have lost".



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This is incorrect. Things such as criteria are **tools** that can be useful to set parameters to the debate, and to persuade people and thereby win a debate. They are not necessary to win a debate, and do not win a debate by themselves.

They will, however, ensure a team is much more likely to have a coherent and winnable case so that a team that uses them is more likely to have a strong case. But they do not win debates simply by being present or not.

If in doubt, again, trust your instincts.

RULE 4: There is no 'marking formula':

Certain schools of thought define the distinction between "arts" and "science" along the following lines.

A science is something that seeks to provide an explanation based in a system.
That system is used to accurately predict future outcomes.

An art, on the other hand, seeks to explain but does not do so using a system that can accurately predict future occurrences

Debating, and adjudicating debates, is an art and not a science. There is no 'debating system' that will enable a team to win every debate. There is not a set number of points for a model, for criteria or for using a statistic. Nor is there a system that will enable an adjudicator to tell which team won a debate.

RULE 5: There IS a marking band – please stick to it:

Although marks are 'out of 100' this competition follows a strict marking band of 60-80. This serves many purposes, including:

- Ensuring there is consistency from one adjudicator to the next, which helps teams track their progress across debates
- Ensuring speakers who give it their best shot are not awarded incredibly low scores. Public speaking can be a daunting task and any student who attempts a speech should have that fact recognised. A lower score than 60 tends to turn students off speaking again.

A full copy of our marking standard is attached to this document and available on our website.

In summary however it outlines:

- A mark of 70 represents an average speaker in that grade.
- A mark of 80 is the best speech you could ever expect in that grade.
- A mark of 60 is someone who stood up, read out the moot and looked blankly for a few seconds before sitting down.



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- All other speeches should fall somewhere in between.
- Marks should show within a debate which speakers were better, worse and equal.
- If applied consistently this band also ensures some comparison can be made across debates.
- Marks for replies should be based on half the marks of a substantive speech.



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FURTHER ADVICE ON DETERMINING THE WINNER

Invalid reasons for awarding a debate (but unfortunately very common):

1. The team had a better reputation.
2. The team ran arguments close to those the adjudicator would have run.
3. The knockout blow.
4. The 'if you had only said the following words' thought.
5. Adding up the marks.
6. Which team was dressed more appropriately/looked better.
7. The team that used better English/language.

Some of these (such as a team's prior reputation) need no explanation, others have already been covered (adding up the marks does **not** determine a winner). Some however deserve greater consideration.

No knockout blows:

Technical imperfections by themselves ought not to be the basis for deciding debate.

Failure to define the moot, problems with case splits etc may detract from the effectiveness of a case but shouldn't be fatal to it.

Adjudicators should be cautious about single arguments winning debates.

Weighting of points:

There is no requirement for teams to "hit" every point; teams can legitimately decide to prioritise their rebuttal time to focus on key arguments.

The weighting of the issues by the adjudicator should reflect the focus that the teams themselves took. The adjudicator should not decide for themselves the key points that need to be made by each side and then decide the debate according to which team came closest to meeting this prior expectation.

Arguments should be signalled by a team early in a debate for them to have greater weighting. If the third negative speaker has a brand new point that comes out of nowhere the affirmative team will have little opportunity to respond: it would be unfair therefore to give it any more than very minimal weighting.

Teams should introduce (even if only briefly) the points they want to make as early as possible. It is permissible for those points to then be explored more fully later in the debate, so long as the opposing team has had adequate warning that they are coming and appropriate time to respond.

Hear what the teams say, not what you want to hear:



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There is a risk of adjudicators analysing the debates against what they would have personally argued. This leads on to a problem of giving teams too much credit when they allude to something that the adjudicator wants to hear (the adjudicator then completes the half argument in his or her mind). If a team raises a point but does not explain it adequately, it should receive less credit than a point which is explained and analysed well.

Don't bring your own views/emotions into the room:

The adjudicator should not give extra credit to teams faced with a supposedly difficult case, nor should they hold them to any higher standard of proof due to the emotional reaction that an adjudicator might feel. Similarly, teams shouldn't need to be apologetic or diffident about running potentially controversial cases if the moot reasonably requires them to do so.

If you find a team offensive – for example, if they make racist or sexist comments, or are particularly unpleasant to their opposition – they will not automatically lose. Rather, their comments may detract from the persuasiveness of their argument, perhaps causing them to lose the debate.

Evidence:

Adjudicators should strongly promote the viewpoint that relevant and preferably recent examples are the only acceptable means for illustrating arguments, and correspondingly discourage in the strongest possible way reliance on less reasonable means of substantiating their cases. Role plays, references to films and songs, quotes from Shakespeare, metaphors, personal anecdotes, stories about family members or friends, or hypothetical situations should NOT be encouraged.

This is important in terms of bringing ASD into line with expectations at other regional tournaments and Nationals, as well as preparing them for debating beyond secondary school. In prepared debates teams reasonably ought to be expected to be able to back up their arguments with appropriate evidence

Style: 2 main points:

(a) Adjudicators should look at the overall effectiveness of the presentation, rather than a narrow list of expectations. Clarity, persuasiveness and professionalism are key, but there are many ways of delivering a speech and adjudicators shouldn't nitpick about technical features, e.g. use of cue cards, unless they genuinely detract from the overall effectiveness of the speech.

(b) Style is often a controversial element of the marking scheme. Ask yourself if one team is clearly ahead on the arguments. If so, that team should win. Yet where teams are relatively close on argument but miles apart on style the result in these grades may turn on style.

A competent or humorous speaker will be more compelling to listen to. You will be more inclined to find their points convincing and their rebuttal will be more effective.



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Remember that style involves more than effective delivery but also seizing the initiative by manipulating the dynamics of the debate, dragging the debate onto a team's ground.

The impact of style is also strongly linked to the level of the debate. At junior open levels in particular, more debates are likely to be won and lost on style. At higher levels (such as in Advanced Open and the Premier grades) one team will be more likely to have a superior case and this is the team who should ultimately win the debate.



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THE ROLE OF TEAMS

A basic understanding of the roles of teams and speakers helps you differentiate a good speaker from a bad one.

Affirmative Team

The affirmative team must set up the debate in a way which enables both teams to make logical and compelling arguments. They must outline and prove a case, eg to adopt proposal X.

1st Affirmative: Should define the topic, outline the team's case and present some part of that case.

2nd Affirmative: Should respond to the negative team's case and present the bulk of the affirmative team's case.

3rd Affirmative: Should respond to the negative team's case and may present a minor aspect of the affirmative team's case (but does not have to).

Leader's Reply/Summary: Should summarise the debate that happened and show why the affirmative case still stands. It is not a rebuttal speech. The leader's reply must be done by either the first or second speaker. It CANNOT be done by the third speaker.

The Negative Team

The negative team must attack and disprove the case of the affirmative team. There is no requirement to propose an 'alternative model', though this may be helpful in some debates.

1st Negative: Should respond to the affirmative team's case, outline the negative team's case and present some part of that case.

2nd Negative: Should respond to the affirmative team's case and present the bulk of the negative team's case.

3rd Negative: Should respond to the affirmative team's case. Should not present any new substantive material for negative except in rebuttal.

Leader's Reply/Summary: Should summarise the debate that happened and show why the affirmative case fell. It is not a rebuttal speech. The leader's reply must be done by either the first or second speaker. It CANNOT be done by the third speaker.



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HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF

Be approachable, confident, and courteous in your manner:

Your aim should be to establish a good rapport with both teams, and to set everyone at ease. This cheerful behaviour is important because the students need to have confidence in you as their adjudicator and feel they are in a non-hostile environment.

Be well organised:

Have your mark-sheet and notepaper with you; know which teams you're judging, the motion, the sides and the speaking times. To have to ask for any of these things is unprofessional.

Take control:

Get the names of the speakers, organise a chairperson/timekeeper, and get the debate started as quickly and efficiently as possible. The teams will be looking to you to organise proceedings.

Introduce yourself:

Teams look to adjudicators for experience and leadership.

As a teacher, students will already associate you with authority, but if you have coached debating for a number of years, feel free to say so (if you haven't feel free to leave this out).

While there may be other coaches, students are parents in the room for the purposes of that debate **you** are in control. Everyone in that room is likely to come to the debate with a bias for one team or another.

Be alert to any major problems such as:

- Loud team discussions during speeches
- Heckling, or any other unhelpful behaviour
- Extensive coaching from the audience

Use your judgement in dealing with these problems. Usually, a firm but polite reminder between speeches is sufficient.



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THE MARKSHEET

The marksheet is only a tool:

It is designed to help you convey to the teams how you saw the debate and how speakers performed relative to each other.

The result you announce is the result of the debate. The marksheet should **always** reflect this result. That said, if accidentally there is a discrepancy between the two, the result you announce, and not the mathematical winner on the sheet, determines who wins the debate.

It flows from this, that deciding who won the debate is **not** a matter of adding up individual marks and **discovering** which team won.

By the end of the debate you should be able to work out, based on the arguments, which team was the winner. The marksheet should reflect this and not the other way around.

It is acceptable to keep a rough tally of marks on a separate sheet of paper which you transpose to the marksheet at the end of the debate.

Fill in the marksheet before announcing the result:

Regardless of the fact the marksheet is only a tool it is also a record of the debate with evidential value. Also teams will want to see it once you have delivered the result.

The marksheet also indicates the adjudicator's ranking of the speakers in a particular debate.

Have the marksheet correctly filled in including team totals and the name of the winning team. Remember, there are NO draws in debating. Double check your addition. Even though the result you announce will stand, when the scores on the marksheet do not match the announced the result it undermines the confidence of the teams, your credibility as an adjudicator and the credibility of the ASD Competition.

Speakers must be given a total score; it is helpful, but not required, to split this score into appropriate matter/manner sub-scores.

Stick to the marking band:

Although marks are 'out of 100' this competition follows a strict marking band of 60-80. This serves many purposes, including:

- Ensuring there is consistency from one adjudicator to the next
- Helping to compare teams from one debate to the next.
- Ensuring speakers who give it their best shot are not awarded incredibly low scores. Public speaking can be a daunting task and any student who attempts a speech should have that fact recognised. A lower score than 60 tends to turn students off doing it again.



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- All other speeches should fall somewhere in between.
- Marks should show within a debate which speakers were better, worse and equal.
- If applied consistently this band also ensures some comparison can be made across debates.
- Marks for replies should be based on half the marks of a substantive speech.

After the debate, always ask yourself whether you could have managed things better. Discuss any problems with other adjudicators.



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THE ADJUDICATION SPEECH

The adjudication speech has two purposes:

- Encourage and develop the speakers; and
- Explain the result

Your speech must cover these two areas.

Try not to give individual criticism/praise:

That means, do not say "So it all came down to the 3rd negative and if only Jeremy had done more rebuttal ...".

Rather, go for statements that are equally specific, but more tactful e.g. "By the end of the substantive speeches, the Negative needed to have rebutted the Affirmative's crucial points on global warming and US nuclear disarmament ..."

Individual feedback is still useful as long as it does not put the debate's result on any one speaker's shoulders. Give it to speakers one-on-one after your main adjudication to avoid embarrassing them or boring others.

FIVE GOLDEN RULES OF THE ADJUDICATION SPEECH

Rule 1: Think through what you are going to say.

Use the time given at the end of the debate not just to finalise your decision and tally up the mark-sheet, but also to prepare brief notes for your adjudication speech

Remember – It's better to take a couple of extra minutes at the end to plan your speech, than to rush into it unprepared.

Rule 2: Be aware of time constraints.

The ever-present temptation is to act as a "seventh speaker". Instead, you should recognise that:

- The debaters' attentions spans will naturally have limits
- There will be tight time constraints on the competition (students and organisers have to get home!)

Remember – A super detailed adjudication seldom equates to a good adjudication

Rule 3: Be intelligible.

It's important to pitch at a level appropriate to the school students you're judging. In particular, you should avoid jargon and elevated technical discussions that will make little sense to relatively inexperienced debaters.



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Remember – Students will be alienated by an excessively sophisticated analysis. Instead your role is to make both the debate and the reasons for your decisions clear to them.

Rule 4: Be enthusiastic and constructive.

The students need to feel that you enjoyed the debate and appreciated their efforts. Extended criticism or ridicule is never a helpful tool with young debaters.

Remember – nine times out of ten, students will know when they have been terrible or completely outclassed. You can make these points without humiliating them in front of their peers.

Rule 5: Always be prepared to give helpful, individual feedback to speakers after the debate.

Time constraints will make this difficult, but debaters will appreciate your interest and, provided it is done well, it adds to your credibility when it is seen that you are prepared to discuss matters with students.

Remember – While you should be prepared to discuss the debate, you do not have to actively defend your decision in a “second debate”. If audience members become antagonistic politely remind them that you are the adjudicator for that debate. We encourage you to explain the outcome to the students; you do not need to defend the decision to unhappy supporters.



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DETERMINING A WINNER: MORE COMPLICATED SCENARIOS

Sometimes during a debate complicated problems can arise. Outlined below are a few of the most common examples and how to deal with them as an adjudicator.

Feel free to read them but do not feel bound by them; remember in this grade you can always come back to a simplistic holistic approach to help you determine a winner (as explained earlier).

Definitional Problems

The affirmative team must define the topic. This does not mean they simply get a dictionary and provide synonyms for individual words. The definition should state the thing the affirmative team is proposing to do.

Teams should define the motion in a clear and reasonable manner. If they can't think of any arguments that another team could use, then there is a problem with their definition.

Definitions should be reasonable and able to be argued by both teams. The best rule about challenging a definition is: don't. That a definition is different from what a team was expecting is not a valid ground for a challenge. Teams should be encouraged to never challenge a definition.

If they must challenge, they should run an 'even if' line: both rebutting whatever the affirmative team argues and running their own case. The other team should also run an 'even if' case.

Generally, as an adjudicator:

Never penalise a team for running an 'even if' case. Usually, it is a sign they are doing well.

Only uphold a definitional challenge if the definition was extremely and blatantly unfair or unreasonable.

Remember to assess which team did an overall better job in the debate. They should be awarded the debate.

There are four usual definitional problems encountered in debates (excluding the definitional challenge).

- The Dictionary definition.
- The Truism
- The "Issueless" definition
- The Squirrel



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The moots used in ASD will render many of these unlikely to occur.

The Dictionary Definition

Usually seen at school level, teams will not actually define the topic in terms that allow for a clear debate, but will replace the words of the topic with synonyms. Teams should be encouraged to define the moot by identifying what the parameters of the debate are – what is the debate really about?

Example:

Moot: "That NZ should have stronger armed forces"

Definition: "Stronger = more strong than"

Such debates don't facilitate for a clear presentation of arguments.

However, they rarely are going to dramatically affect the outcome of a debate.

The Truism

The topic is defined in such a way that it becomes self proving.

Example:

Moot: "That America is a global bully"

Definition: "A bully is someone who uses his/her power to influence others. America does this and is therefore a bully."

Truisms do not allow either side to present proper argument.

Truisms will usually founder about 6 minutes into the 1st affirmative speech, as it is usually impossible to develop an argument from a truistic definition.

The Issueless Definition

The topic is defined in such a way that there is no real issue behind it. Often very close to a truism.

Example:

Moot: "That all the meek inherit is the dirt".

Definition: "Meaning that meek people will get nothing much from life."

Again, it is almost impossible to advance compelling argument (for either team).

As with a truism, argument will run out very quickly.

The Squirrel

The topic is defined in an unreasonable way.



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Example:

Moot: "That tourism is a global menace"

Definition: "International money speculators should be outlawed."

Squirrels (at school level) are unfair on an opposing team, especially in a prepared competition.

A team shouldn't automatically lose for squirreling, but an adjudicator should look favourably on a negative that responds to the argument set up by the affirmative.

On squirreling: Narrowing a topic by setting a scope for the debate is perfectly legitimate, and indeed should be encouraged an example is:

Moot: "That NZ should follow US lead"

Definition: "should follow economic lead by joining NAFTA" is valid.

Note: Given the types of moots being used in the competition, it is unlikely squirrels or issueless definitions will occur.

Also note: None of these situations is a 'death blow' to a team. Most are intrinsically problematic, and don't warrant any extra 'mark taking off'. All debates should be judged holistically.

Case Problems

- 'Examples' Case
- 'Ships Passing' Case
- Shrinking Onus
- Hung/Bridged Case
- Definitional Problems

The 'Examples' Case:

A case that consists basically of a list of examples that may be related to the moot. The relevancy of the examples is never properly explained and the case therefore has little argument.

Example: "This House believes that US foreign policy was responsible for September the 11th"

The Affirmative team provides a list of examples of a poor US Arab policy (for example - support of corrupt monarchies, support of Israel, failure to overthrow Saddam Hussein.) The Negative team can also do the same (for example by citing Kosovo, Haiti, Somalia.)



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This fails to fulfil role required of the teams to advance and present an argument. The necessary analysis that links these examples to responsibility and September 11 is missing.

In this situation, whichever team provides the most analysis should win.

The 'Ships Passing' Case:

In this situation there is little, if any, substantive clash between the cases of the teams.

Example: "That the UN has failed"

The Affirmative sets up a debate about whether or not the UN needs a standing army to ensure that it can effectively maintain peace.

The Negative team does not engage, but talks only about the work done by the WHO and UNICEF.

The negative team fails to fulfil its fundamental role of negating the argument of the affirmative.

Generally, in this situation the negative team will lose.

Shrinking Onus:

Throughout the debate, a team back-pedals on what it has to prove in order to win the debate.

Example: "That international boundaries are out of date"

The Affirmative team starts by arguing they will prove that boundaries are no longer relevant because globalisation has made national sovereignty obsolete. By second speaker this has become that borders are out of date because governments need to work with other governments to operate in the international environment. By third speaker borders are out of date because people can transfer their money overseas easily, or can talk to people on the internet.

The affirmative fails to fulfil its role of advancing a clear and consistent argument.

Both teams can fall victim to shrinking onuses. Usually, however, it is the affirmative that is the guilty party, and it is usually a sign that the negative team has successfully disproved large sections of the affirmative case.

Hung/Bridged Case:

This is a rare occurrence, when a team spreads its arguments across speakers in a series of logical syllogisms, such that each speech does not of itself directly support the central argument.

Example "That the Treaty settlements are a fraud"



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1st Affirmative sets out the historical situation leading up to the current settlement process.

2nd Affirmative describes the Treaty settlements.

3rd Affirmative argues why the settlements are a fraud.

The argument is not actually arrived at until the final speech. Thus the affirmative has not (for the first two speeches) provided a case the negative can constructively engage with. Also, third speaker should not be used to bring out substantive arguments.

Both teams can advance bridged arguments, though usually it will be an affirmative team who does so. Usually bridged arguments don't win debates.

Remember!

All of the above examples and guidelines should help you recognize a good case from a bad one. Ultimately (and if you are in doubt) the primary role of any debating team is to convince you as an adjudicator that they have won the debate. As a golden rule, if you are intuitively more convinced by one team then it's likely that team has fulfilled their role and won the debate.

If the above guidelines confuse you in a debate or lead to the wrong outcome, bring the debate back to basics and make the decision on which team put forward the most convincing arguments and case. Ask yourself whether the goals set by the affirmative team were met or not and whether the affirmative team's substantive points stood at the end of the debate.

Also when delivering the result have regard to the guide presented at the start of this document.