

Changes to National Tournament Operating Procedures and Rules of Debating and Judging

Preface

As caretakers of the National Parliamentary Debate Association, the Executive Council is charged with the consideration of both the present and the future health of the organization. It is also vitally important that we, as leaders, remain cognizant of the conditions that gave rise to the formation of NPDA and its predecessor (WSPDA) while listening to the concerns of ALL constituencies of the organization. In trying to listen to these many voices, and maintain focus on the past, present, and future, one thing becomes immediately apparent—parliamentary debate in the United States is greatly divided, and that division is a very real threat to the educational opportunities presented by the activity's existence. This observation gives rise to the following document, a product of the summer meeting of NPDA Officers in Kirksville, Missouri, June 27-29, 2008, and work that has continued through August.

Absent Mission or Forgotten Heritage?

A common refrain at NPDA business meetings and gatherings of NPDA coaches these days is, "If we're going to make some changes, we have to come to an understanding of what this organization's goals are!" It seems, at times, like those goals are somehow elusive—that students, coaches, and organizational leaders are no clearer today about what those goals are now than when we tried to tackle some of these issues at NPDA's Constitutional Convention in Prescott, Arizona, in 2004. That assumption, we believe, is shortsighted. Indeed, we have *very good* guidance as to the organization's goals if we look to the words of those who gave the organization its start and nurtured it over the last decade.

The earliest conversations that resulted in the formation of the forerunner of NPDA—the Western States Parliamentary Debate Association—focused on access. Al Johnson observed in his account of NPDA's history (available on the NPDA website) that the then-dominant debate option had "made it almost impossible for bright students with little, or no, experience in debate to compete." In the Fall 1994 issue of *Parliamentary Debate*, Johnson reflected on early conversations he had with one of his founding colleagues, noting, "I saw the possibility of parliamentary debate opening the door to two groups of students: first, the same inexperienced student that CEDA originally appealed to and second, those students who normally only do individual events." For Johnson, NPDA was a useful *supplement* to existing debate formats and organizations—not necessarily a replacement for them. Susan Epstein, NPDA's second Executive Secretary, argued in *Parliamentary Debate*'s Fall 1992 issue that the new format was ideal for smaller programs with fewer resources. Her argument was couched on assumptions of a very different competitive environment than parliamentary debaters face today: a more robust local circuit, more reasonable research burdens, and less pressure for larger coaching staffs.

In the Fall 1996 issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy*, NPDA President, Robert Trapp, opined, "...the goals of the NPDA should be to create parliamentary debating as a form of good public debating." Without naming other organizations explicitly, Trapp contrasted the format with cross-examination debating on a number of levels, including that "Parliamentary debaters are expected to develop expertise and understanding of a wide range of topics and issues, unlike cross-examination debaters who will develop more restricted but deeper knowledge on a given topic."

President Skip Rutledge encouraged NPDA to "appreciate and improve upon what is unique to our format of debate and not worry about what others may say, do or think" when he wrote in the Summer 1999 issue of *Parliamentary Debate*. He continued: "Let us not define ourselves by what we are not, but instead seek out what we are and what we wish to become, and know the reasons why."

In the Summer of 2001, President Tom Kuster reaffirmed much of what had been said by his predecessors in an article for *Parliamentary Debate*, writing:

NPDA is broadly thought of as the primary organization for promoting the practice of parliamentary debate in the U.S. on all levels. *Parliamentary debate honors this educational value by developing NPDA*

programs for encouraging the novice speaker as well as the experienced, supporting new or struggling programs as well as the established ones, encouraging focus at all levels on the educational values of parliamentary debate, and guiding practice in tournaments around the nation as well as in the NPDA National Championship Tournament. *We risk losing this educational value when we consider NPDA primarily or solely its National Championship Tournament, or view the organization's function primarily or solely as a means of determining who are the top of "elite" debaters in the nation.*

Even a cursory read of the historical documents of NPDA, and the articles appearing in its own journal over the years, reveals far more of a consensus among the organization's founders and elected leaders on the pedagogical and organizational objective of the organization than may be immediately apparent to the participant in 2008. These values, however, contrast with much of what parliamentary debate is now becoming.

The Kirksville Consensus

The Executive Council, in session for a summer meeting, reached unanimous agreement on the need for substantive change in the direction of NPDA. Through several actions taken at that meeting, the five elected officers (including the National Student Representative) made several crucial observations about the state of parliamentary debate and formulated policies accordingly. We observed that:

- Current trends in parliamentary debate competition, including the evolution of a competitive national circuit, and the weakening of regional circuits, have contributed to the exclusion of several constituencies of the NPDA community, including novices, under-funded programs, and programs with traditional perspectives on debate competition.
- While NPDA membership remains numerically stable, numerous long-term programs have begun to leave the format for alternative formats (such as Worlds) perceived as more pedagogically or philosophically consistent with the reasons they *originally* joined NPDA. These departures include founding programs and directors, long-term organizational stalwarts, former Presidents, and former national champions.
- The competitive environment at NPDA tournaments has become increasingly litigious, contentious, and unwelcoming. Rightly or wrongly, charges of unethical, unsporting, or antisocial behavior are becoming more routine, and as officers, we find ourselves devoting more and more time to fielding complaints that begin with, "Don't you think 'x' is illegal under the rules?" or "When are you going to do something about 'y' we keep seeing in rounds?" We have become arbiters of competing opportunistic strategies rather than facilitators of educational opportunity.
- Community has become subordinate to competition and strategy. When claiming ownership over the optimal classroom space for preparation, or dodging ballot pickup to get a jump on prep time becomes more important than the shared experience of learning and growing, it is time to take stock of where we are.

"W(h)ither" NPDA?

This question was posed by Donn Parson, long-term Tournament Director of the NDT, when writing in commemoration of the tournament's 50th Anniversary in the Summer 1996 issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy*. Then he was talking about the health and vitality of his organization in a world where CEDA and NDT were merging (and though unmentioned in the article, NPDA was emergent). His question is not unlike one some can ask about NPDA today.

Where do these changes come from? Where are we going? In truth, evolution in debate organizations is most likely an inevitable outcome of our very human strivings for perfection. Nonetheless, we cannot help but observe that many of the trends that have driven the development of parliamentary debate have come, at least in part, as a result of the birth and growth of the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence (NPTE). Before we continue this line of thought, it is important to underscore the words of former President Kuster in 2003:

Certainly, all forms of academic debate furnish important benefits to student participants as well as to school programs. It does not disparage any debate format to observe that each provides its own special profile of educational values. A program director's thoughtful choice of format is based on the specific educational outcomes sought for students, and does not imply the superiority or inferiority of any format.

It is, perhaps, ironic that an NPDA President who was so widely criticized by some in this community for his traditional outlook on debate, would be the person we turn to in support of the claim that difference can be celebrated. But Kuster was right on this, and many other points.

The NPTE's success as a quasi-organization has carved-out a special space for those teams who wish to compete in an environment that nurtures and rewards elite competitors in parliamentary debate. It has enabled students with greater experience in the activity to experiment with arguments that may or may not be accessible to all who participate in the activity.

Nonetheless, the existence of a growing elite circuit in parliamentary debate, with all of the unique challenges that greater competitiveness brings, has pushed an element of the NPDA community out of parliamentary debate altogether and has helped to produce a form of debate that is largely unrecognizable to those who embraced the format in the early 1990s. Because NPTE and NPDA share a common circuit, the drive among many participants has been to remake NPDA in NPTE's image—to create two chances at a national championship with a common rule set. It is because we value access that we think more of a concerted effort needs to be made to preserve space for all types of debater in the broader American parliamentary debate spectrum.

Our Suggested Course

Because we believe a space is needed for ALL kinds of debaters in the parliamentary debate community, we believe it is necessary to make reasonable adjustments to NPDA's Tournament Operating Procedures and Rules of Debating to preserve a space that welcomes those who may not feel fully at home in the elite space promoted by the NPTE. The changes offered in this document are designed not to retrench NPDA in some backward, reactionary posture; but to clarify existing practices to reflect the traditions that defined NPDA in the first place. At the same time, we wish to celebrate NPTE and its success. We see the *parallel* growth of the NPDA and NPTE as *alternatives* to different constituencies in the parliamentary debate community and a welcome opportunity to keep American parliamentary debate alive and vibrant in all its forms. We see these two tournaments as different branches of the same tree, but separate branches nonetheless.

Most of the actions described in the following document are relatively non-controversial adjustments to existing procedures to make our National Championship Tournament more efficient and fair, and to protect students in instances where disputes arise. There are, however, several changes which are more sweeping in their impact. These include: changes in NPDA's policy regarding constraints, the implementation of measures to prevent materials prepared in advance from being brought into debates, and measures to better ensure the accessibility of debates to a broader audience of auditors. The rationales for each of these changes are offered below.

Force of Action

While the NPDA has a long history of submitting all its changes in policy to a membership vote, and the general oeuvre of the Prescott Convention was to further curtail the power of the Executive Council, the Rules of Debating, the guidelines for tournament hosts, and the Tournament Operating Procedures were severed from the Bylaws in 2005 to create greater flexibility in their management and adjustment, and to position these policies as management guidelines—not laws. While the Council has generally been passive, deferring to initiatives from the membership to adjust these documents legislatively, the Executive Council has acted here to amend these policies under its authority to manage these documents on an on-going basis.

While healthy change is good, we firmly believe that the continued loss of members to the rapid pace of *exclusionary* change is a trend that simply cannot be allowed to continue unchecked and that the urgency of the problems observed here negates waiting the one or two years that it would take to address each of these issues by differing to NPDA's legislative process. Nonetheless, we clearly recognize past practice is a powerful force, and we take very seriously the choice to initiate such changes as a Council. Consequently, we have limited these changes to ones of great managerial importance for the National Tournament and philosophical consistency with past practice. We hope that our unanimity underscores the thought we have given to this question.

As always, members are entitled to bring forth legislation to expand upon these actions, amend, or overturn them by filing legislation for consideration at the November business meeting no later than October 22, 2008. It is our hope

that the membership will find themselves in substantial agreement with the motives and the outcomes articulated in the following pages.

Kevin Minch, President
Renea Gernant, Vice President
Danny Cantrell, Executive Secretary
Brent Northup, Treasurer
Joshua Seefried, National Student Representative

Getting Rounds Started on Time

Change #1: Alteration in the Procedure for Pushing Ballots to Judges and Enforcing Judge Presence

Summary: This policy codifies a set of procedures for the prompt distribution of judges' ballots and penalties for judges who are not present in the announcement venue at the time of ballot distribution. It also ensures the timely arrival of judges at their rounds.

Rationale: Ballot distribution has become a very difficult business at the National Championships. Because coaches and judges are frequently ensconced in preparation rooms, they are increasingly not available to pick-up their ballots in a timely fashion. Perhaps even more critically problematic is the process of "pushing" ballots. For fairness in distribution of qualified judges, the computer generates a list of possible replacement judges when a ballot is pushed. The tab room attempts to place the first available judge, then the second, and so forth. However, when only a small number of judges are present in the announcement venue each round, these ballots are repeatedly distributed to the same people. Not only is this unfair to those individuals, but it also decreases an optimal distribution of rounds to judges across the pool—something that should be the goal of everyone in creating a fairly judged tournament.

This policy also stipulates that judges are to arrive at their rounds on time—just as students are required to do. It suggests a mechanism whereby students might inform the tab room of judges who are showing-up late to their rounds. We envision a simple "judge survey" form, made available to students, who can place reports on judges in a box outside of the tab room. The tab staff can use this to monitor and follow-up on errant judge behavior with regard to time of arrival, or other problems.

The following shall amend aspects of section H of the National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures.

H. Judge Assignment (skip down to sub-section 6)

6. All judges are required to be present at the topic announcement site from the scheduled ballot release time until all of the ballots for that round have been distributed. All judges are required to pick up their own ballots within 5 minutes of the ballots being released. A financial penalty of fifty dollars for each preliminary and 100 dollars for each elimination round will be imposed against any and all judges who fail to be available to judge all rounds for which they are obligated. Fines must be paid promptly, as determined by the tournament director.
 - a. Ballots will begin to be pushed and fines assessed 5 minutes after the ballots are released.
 - b. Judges to whom a ballot is pushed have 1 minute to pick up the ballot. If they fail to pick up the ballot they will be assessed the appropriate fine and the ballot will be pushed to the next available judge.
 - c. Teams from schools who have not paid penalties for their judges failing to pick up assigned and/or pushed ballots will not be allowed to advance to elimination rounds.
 - d. Until fines are paid, the judge's affiliated or hiring school will be suspended from NPDA membership.

- e. All fines are subject to appeal to the National Championship Tournament Ombudsperson on the basis of extenuating circumstances.
7. **Judges shall arrive at their debates on time.** A financial penalty of fifty dollars for each preliminary and one hundred dollars for each elimination round will be imposed against any and all judges who fail to be available to judge ~~at~~ rounds to which they are obligated.
- a. **Debaters shall be afforded the opportunity to inform the tab room of judges who are late to their rounds. The Tournament Director shall have the discretion of imposing penalties, equivalent to those imposed for a missed round, for lateness.**
 - b. Until fines are paid, the judge's affiliated or hiring school will be suspended from NPDA membership **and denied participation in elimination rounds.**
 - c. All fines are subject to appeal to **the National Championship Tournament Ombudsperson** ~~rules and standards committee~~ on the basis of extenuating circumstances.

(Subsequent numbers in the document shall be renumbered to reflect the above insertion.)

Implementation

The above information shall also be added to the critic certification forms. A statement of responsibility shall be added to the enrollment verification form for the DOF to sign, affirming that they understand the responsibility for judges to pick-up their ballots in a timely matter and that they will be held financially liable for their failure to comply.

Change #2: Changes in Procedures for Enforcing Timely Arrival and Start of Debates

Summary: This policy creates a more predictable mechanism for enforcing the start of debates. It eliminates the ambiguous notion of a grace period and clearly defines expectations for the timely start of the debate round. It adopts a system whereby initial offenses and repeat offenses might be sanctioned differently. It empowers the tournament director to clearly establish the maximum duration of preparation and transit time.

Rationale: Numerous teams abuse the length of prep time—both at invitational tournaments and at Nationals. This abuse ranges from bathroom breaks taken at the expiration of prep time to flagrant lateness that sometimes extends for lengthy periods. While the unique layout of USAFA allowed for relatively prompt and strict enforcement of published time limits for preparation time, this is not as practical at other tournament locations. A mechanism needs to exist whereby judges might enforce time limits with clear guidelines—and enforce them consistently. Where the status quo gives judges wide discretion to enforce a penalty up to and during a five minute grace period, allowing for differential enforcement, this policy allows for consistent application of penalties. The procedure also needs to allow for the possibility of the occasional “error” in late arrival due to misdirection. The proposal adopts the language of the “yellow card” and “red card” to flag different degrees of lateness and repetition to allow for the possibility that one “accidental” late arrival might occur.

The National Championship Tournament Procedures document shall be amended to read as follows:

- F. Topics and Topic Announcement
 - 1. In addition to the responsibilities indicated under the Championship Tournament Committee, Subcommittee duties, the Topic Selection Committee shall select an appropriate number of topics to be debated at the tournament.
 - 2. A different topic will be announced prior to each debate.
 - 3. Debates shall begin a specified number of minutes after the announcement of the topic. **The specified preparation and transit** time shall be fifteen minutes plus the amount of time needed to walk to the furthest building in which debates are being held, **as determined by the tournament director.** The official start of prep time shall be announced with the topic. Debaters and judges are responsible for starting their time at the time of announcement.

[Note: H 6. and 7. are changed above and relate to this policy change. See Change #1]

(Skip down to section I)

I. Enforcement of Tournament Rules (jump down to section 2)

2. In addition to enforcing Section 4 of the NPDA Tournament Rules, the judge (or in the case of multiple judge panels, the Speaker of the House) shall be responsible for declaring a forfeiture to a team not showing for a debate. After the expiration of the allotted time between announcement of the topic and the beginning of the debate, ~~a judge may give up to a maximum of five minutes grace before declaring the debate a forfeit~~ **shall report violations via the ballot.**
 - a. **Arrival within 1 minute of the expiration of time shall result in a warning (for the purpose of tournament procedure, this shall be referred to as a “Yellow Card”)**
 - b. **Arrival after 1 minute shall result in forfeiture of the round (a “Red Card”)**
 - c. **Teams receiving a second Yellow Card shall have the second Yellow Card and all subsequent late rounds treated as an automatic forfeiture.**

Further, the Rules of Debating and Judging shall be amended to read as follows...

1. Resolutions

- A. A different resolution for each round will be presented to the debaters at a specified time prior to the beginning of each debate. The specified time will be determined by adding fifteen minutes to the amount of time needed to walk to the most distant building in which debates are to occur, **as determined by the tournament director.**

Change #3: Changes Pertaining to Online Posting
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Summary: This policy expressly limits online posting by tournament officials to results and topics AFTER the conclusion of the round (similar to existing warm room postings) and prevents the tournament director from posting topics or schematics online in digital form.

Rationale: As the last two years have demonstrated, there is too much that can go wrong with online postings: network problems, posting delays, problems reading visual displays. Additionally, the use of online postings has decreased attendance at the topic announcement, reducing the number of judges available to receive assigned or pushed ballots and confusing student/judge perceptions of the actual start of preparation time. A return to an exclusively oral and auditorium-based topic announcement ensures a common topic announcement time, and increases judge and student attendance at the announcement site.

Section G.4 of the National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall be changed to read as follows:

- G. Scheduling of the Debates (skip down to sub-section 4)
 4. Tab Room Disclosure. After tabulating the results of each preliminary round 1-7 and releasing the pairings for the subsequent round, the tabulation staff will post the results of the previous round by highlighting the team that won in a common area accessible to all tournament participants. **Only results of rounds may be posted online during the tournament.**

Add G. 6. **During the tournament topics and schematics shall not be posted online by the tournament staff.**

Preparation Rooms and Resources

Change #4: Clarification of NPDA’s Position on Team “Preparation Rooms”
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Summary: This policy statement regulates the use of preparation rooms and offers penalties for the abuse of these rooms by the teams that appropriate them.

Rationale: A common outgrowth of the use of preparation rooms is rooms that are not clean-enough to use in competition—that participants have to clean or reorganize to find workable space for competition. An additional outgrowth is cost to hosts in time and custodial service fees for the clean-up of rooms used by teams in preparation. On occasion, host schools receive complaints about the treatment of classrooms. Indeed, the tournament administration of NPDA has received these complaints at past tournaments. This policy does not aim to eliminate the preparation room, but does place upon the user the responsibility for the care of the room and any financial penalties the host may incur as a result of a team’s abuse of preparation space.

The following statement shall be added to the NPDA national tournament invitation:

Prep areas are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Teams who use prep areas must register the location with tournament staff. Teams are responsible for returning the room to its original condition at the end of preparation time. Teams prepping in competition rooms must completely vacate the room at the end of prep time. Teams failing to comply with these guidelines shall be stripped of the privilege of using host rooms for preparation for the duration of the tournament. If costs are incurred by the host school to clean the space, these costs will be billed to the offending school and that school shall be excluded from NPDA membership until such fees are paid.

Change #5: Clarification of Expectations About Internet Availability

Summary: This policy makes it clear to potential hosts that provision of the Internet to participants is not a requirement and cannot be used by the Site Committee to exclude their institution from consideration as a site.

Rationale: Universities are imposing increasingly restrictive policies on access to their computer networks. While some institutions maintain liberal policies, an increasing number impose limits on access by large groups—or prohibit it altogether. The last two sites have experienced problems with Internet access. At the same time, the Topic Committee has demonstrated that it is possible to frame topics that are debatable, absent Internet access. In a time when the NPDA is lucky to get more than one site bid in a given year, a perceived or actual policy requiring Internet access (with the emphasis today on perception) deters possible hosts. Similarly, the complexity of getting commitments from IT departments in any given year risks continued uncertainty as to the Internet’s availability at any given site. This policy makes it clear to members that there is no certainty of Internet access at national tournaments and assures hosts that they should proceed with bids, even if access to the Internet on the campus is uncertain.

The NPDA document detailing hosting requirements for Nationals (posted online as <http://www.parlidebate.org/pdf/nov05-hostingnats.pdf>) shall be amended to read as follows:

Add as item 12 under subpoint A:

12. While the host may provide the NPDA Championship Tournament with Internet access, having Internet access is not considered a requirement for the bid.

Judging

Change #6: Application of a Speaker Point Rubric

Summary: This policy mandates the restoration of the previously-employed speaker point rubric, used on ballots in most of the period after 2001 and prior to 2007.

Rationale: Speaker points being assigned at Nationals are widely inconsistent in a way that does not appear to be reflective of actual differences in skill. On one end of the spectrum, there is widespread point inflation, with many ballots providing straight 30s all-around. On the other end of the spectrum the tab rooms receive ballots from judges who consistently provide points in the range from 10-20. Indeed, while there are instances where extremely low, or

extremely high, points are warranted, the pattern of these outliers would seem to suggest a less than meaningful result.

The most recent printed speaker point rubric, used at the 2005 National Tournament, but left off ballots in 2007 and 2008, shall be returned to regular use.

Strikes and Constraints

Change #7: Change to the Strike Ceilings

Summary: The Tournament Director, in concert with the Executive Council, has elected to set the number of strikes for the Championship Tournament at or near the minimum level permitted by current language in the Tournament Operating Procedures, which is 15%.

Rationale: NPDA affords teams the right to constrain judges who will not evaluate rounds fairly. The actual number of strikes has escalated to such an extent that teams are more in a position to select the judges they want through strikes than to merely exclude those who judge them unfairly. A more diverse and random judge assignment procedure should produce greater opportunities for judge adaptation and be more inclusive of a diverse range of opinions in debate. This change does not alter existing policy, but merely draws down the actual number of strikes allowed towards the minimum previously established for the Championship Tournament.

Change #8: Change to the Procedure Used to Declare Constraints

Summary: This policy will create a double-check in the process of assigning constraints. Both teams and judges will be asked to provide a list of constraints and they will be asked to justify them. Categories for possible constraints will be limited to prevent constraints from being used strategically to exclude judges with whom teams merely have a bad track record with, or with whom they have previously had a poor relationship.

Rationale: Currently, only students mark constrained judges on the judge strike form. However, there may be cases where teams miss judges to constrain. The tabulation room needs the most accurate list of team-judge constraints in order to avoid pushing ballots of unknown constrained judges. Furthermore, currently, students mark constraints on the judge strike form. Past tournament directors have reviewed each team's number of constraints to ensure no one is "gaming out" the situation although there is no requirement that they *must* review these constraints. Therefore, teams, when entering constraints, should have to provide an acceptable justification for the constraint. Teams should not be able to increase the number of strikes by exploiting the constraint process. This ensures that the TD is convinced that all constraints are warranted.

H 3. of the National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall be changed to read:

3. No team will be judged by someone associated with either member of the team or the team's school for the past four years. All teams and judges registered for the tournament should note such conflicts on their entry. **At registration, judges will be provided a team list to return to the tab staff marked with any teams they feel they should be constrained against.**

Change H 3. to add after the text above:

Any constraints entered by a team in effect for the tournament will need to be justified and accepted by the Tournament Director based on the following categories: former coaches, former team members, romantic relationships.

Scheduling and Paneling Rounds

Change #9: Changes to the Scheduling of Hybrid Teams

Summary: This change is designed to protect hybrid teams from meeting their school's teammates in rounds and to divide the sweepstakes points they earn between the two squads their members come from.

Rationale: Hybrid teams serve, first and foremost, a pedagogical purpose. They exist to empower students to compete who would not otherwise be able to do so because of an odd number of competitors on their squads or extenuating circumstances (a sick partner, etc.). Teams should not be discouraged from providing tournament access to these students when such a hybrid is truly necessary. This policy ensures that teams will not face the uncomfortable experience of having to debate their teammates because of their membership in a hybrid. The proposal is consistent with the practice the organization already employs when brackets pit members of the same school against one another. The division of earned sweepstakes points appropriately rewards the teams from which the students emerge for their investment in the work of the students.

The National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall be amended to read as follows:

- C. Debater Eligibility
1. All entering schools must be members of the NPDA.
 2. Eligibility to participate in the tournament is defined by NPDA By-Law VIII. Each nomination must include a statement by the registrar (or other appropriate university official) testifying that the debaters are enrolled in the institution as prescribed in NPDA By-Law VIII.
 3. Ordinarily a team will consist of two persons from the same school. Hybrid teams (with one member from each of two different schools) are also permitted; although, no school is permitted to have more than one debater participating as a member of a hybrid team. ~~Hybrid teams will be entered as if they are a separate school. Thus, a hybrid team is eligible to debate against teams from the schools of which its membership is composed. The performance of hybrid teams will not be included in the calculation of sweepstakes awards.~~ **Hybrid teams will not meet teams from either of the two schools in prelims or elimination rounds. Hybrid success will count toward tournament sweepstakes, with each school receiving 50 percent of the total points earned.**

Change #10: Structure of Semifinal and Final Round Panels
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Summary: The policy expands the judge selection procedure for the final round to the semifinal rounds.

Rationale: In an effort to diversify the judging panels for the semi and final rounds to be representative of the national organization the judge assignment method for semis and finals would change from the standard elimination round procedure. We feel it would be beneficial to potentially include dignitaries in our national championship rounds and are worried that if they are invited they will not have the opportunity to judge. We also feel that the most geographically diverse panel would best be able to determine the national champion. Furthermore, by defining what the NPDA final should look like we hope to influence what the rest of the debates in the tournament look like. If teams are aware that the final round judging panel will follow this procedure then earlier rounds will likely feature greater judge adaptation.

Section H 1. of the National Championship Tournament Procedures shall be amended as follows:

- H. Judge Assignment
1. Each preliminary round should be adjudicated by one judge. Each elimination round prior to the quarter final round will be adjudicated by no fewer than three judges. The quarter final and semi finals will be adjudicated by no fewer than five judges. The final round will be adjudicated by no fewer than seven judges. At the discretion of the Tournament Director, each team in the **semi and final round of** debate may be allowed to remove one or more judges from a tentative panel. In this case, the Tournament Director has the right to name one judge who cannot be removed by either team. **The team will be given up to three minutes to return the judge strike card or forfeit their right to strike judges. From the remaining potential judge panel, the tab room will randomly assign judges to the debates. The final judge panel will then be announced to the teams debating.**

Change #11: Changes to Coin Toss Procedure

Summary: The policy brings the coin toss back at the quarterfinal level of the tournament.

Rationale: It is believed that ceremony adds to the Championship Tournament experience. The change is a minimal investment in time without changing randomness.

The National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall be amended to insert language into section

G 5. e. The new text shall read as follows:

- e. Sides in the elimination rounds will be reversed if the teams have met in the preliminary rounds. If the teams have not met before, sides will be determined randomly **until the quarter final round. Starting with the quarter final round, unless sides are locked, a coin toss will determine sides. The team listed first will call the side in the coin toss.**

Rule Enforcement and Implementation

Change #12: Changes in Preparation Material / National Tournament Paper

Summary: The policy would create new language designed to prevent the use of materials prepared outside of the preparation time for any given round. It would use official paper as the mechanism to achieve this while clearly stipulating the penalty for using material prepared before the round or not copied during preparation time.

Rationale: It is a well-known reality that many teams are employing materials that were prepared for other rounds, or were prepared before the tournament, by merely pulling old notes from their backpacks or files. It is further well-known that students are employing work written by teammates or coaches. While this policy does not aim to prevent students from copying-over material used in previous rounds to a new sheet of paper in order to reuse it, it is aimed to prevent students from amassing pre-prepared materials in significant quantities. In short, it aims to reinforce the extemporaneous nature of parliamentary debate as described in organizational documents.

The Rules of Debating shall be amended to read:

4. During the debate
 - A. Any published information (dictionaries, magazines, etc.), which may have been consulted before the debate, cannot be brought into the debating chambers for use during the debate. Except for notes that the debaters themselves have prepared during preparation time and a copy of the NPDA "Rules of Debating and Judging," no published materials, prepared arguments, or resources for the debaters' use in the debate may be brought into the debating chambers.
 - B. **Additional Resources:**
 1. **Each team will be allowed timers, writing instruments, a copy of the NPDA rules and tournament paper provided for that specific round.**
 2. **Ten minutes prior to topic announcement tournament paper will be released to competitors**
 - a. **Each individual competitor will be provided with 15 sheets of letter-sized paper per round**
 - b. **A copy of the tournament paper for each round will be provided to the judges when retrieving ballots.**
 - c. **No competitor may use any other paper in the debate round that is not provided by NPDA for that specific round. Any team that uses any other paper during a debate round must be given a loss for the round.**
 - d. **Only material handwritten by the competitors may be put on the tournament paper and used in the debate.**

- C. Debaters may refer to any information that is within the realm of knowledge of liberally educated and informed citizens. If they believe some cited information to be too specific, debaters may request that their opponent explain specific information with which they are unfamiliar. In the event further explanation of specific information is requested, the debater should provide details sufficient to allow the debater to understand the connection between the information and the claim. Judges will disallow specific information only in the event that no reasonable person could have access to the information: e.g., information that is from the debater's personal family history.

Change #13: Clarification of Speaker Positions

Summary: This policy clarifies speaker roles to make clear that the first constructive speaker is also the team rebuttalist.

Rationale: The previous language of the NPDA Rules of Debating and judging left some ambiguity as to whether a second constructive speaker could also provide a rebuttal, thereby rendering the first proposition speaker a simple mouthpiece for the articulation of the team's case and raising the possibility that the second opposition speaker might create a de facto 12 minute opposition speech. As some teams began to engage in this practice this season, confusion emerged as to whether this was or was not consistent with the activity's history and intent. This change is made to eliminate that confusion and underscore the distinct importance of each speaker in the debate. From researching old documents we have determined that the prior change in language on the NPDA website was not intentional. This provides the necessary clarification.

The NPDA Rules of Debating shall be amended with the following clarification:

- C. Format of the debate
 - First Proposition Constructive **Speaker:** 7 minutes
 - First Opposition Constructive **Speaker:** 8 minutes
 - Second Proposition Constructive **Speaker:** 8 minutes
 - Second Opposition Constructive **Speaker:** 8 minutes
 - Opposition Rebuttal by First **Speaker:** 4 minutes
 - Proposition Rebuttal by First **Speaker:** 5 minutes

The National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall be amended to add Section E 5 and this new section shall read:

- 5. **The first speaker for each team will deliver the first constructive and the rebuttal for each side. The second speaker for each team will deliver the second constructive.**

Change #14: Tournament Director Oversight

Summary: This change places the Executive Council in a position of responsibility for supporting the Tournament Director's choice to deviate from standard operating procedures. The policy also enables the line of appeal for Tournament Director decisions taken to the National Championship Tournament Ombudsperson.

Rationale: The Tournament Director appoints the National Championship Tournament Committee, making it an inappropriate body to affirm or deny the Tournament Director's desire to deviate from standard procedures or abrogate the Bylaws. Because the Executive Council is an elected body, with jurisdiction over the Tournament Director's appointment and the management of Tournament Operating Procedures, it is the appropriate body for oversight in these instances.

The National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall be amended to read as follows:

- A. Tournament Staff

1. The Tournament Director shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Council and shall serve at the pleasure of the President.
 - a. The Tournament Director shall oversee all aspects of the tournament, and shall be responsible for administering the tournament according to the Operating Procedures contained within this **document** and related NPDA By-Laws.
 - b. In extreme circumstances, the Tournament Director may deviate from the Tournament Operating Procedures when his or her decision to do so is supported by a majority vote of the **Executive Council National Championship Tournament Committee**. Any such deviations and the reasons for making them must be reported to the membership of the Association in a timely manner.

The document will be further amended to read:

I. Enforcement of Tournament Rules

1. Enforcement of Section 4 of the NPDA Tournament Rules (section entitled "During the Debate") shall be the province of the judge (or in the case of multiple judge panels, of the Speaker of the House). In the case of a dispute regarding a judge's interpretation of the rules, enforcement of the rules, or adhering to the procedures of the tournament, one or both debate teams may appeal a judge's decision regarding sanctions to the tournament director for a final decision. All judges adjudicating at the Championship Tournament shall affirm, that they have read, understand and agree to abide by the NPDA rules and guidelines for judging, including the Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy, prior to submitting their required judging philosophy.
2. In addition to enforcing Section 4 of the NPDA Tournament Rules, the judge (or in the case of multiple judge panels, the Speaker of the House) shall be responsible for declaring a forfeiture to a team not showing for a debate. After the expiration of the allotted time between announcement of the topic and the beginning of the debate, a judge may give up to a maximum of five minutes grace before declaring the debate a forfeit.
3. Enforcement of all other sections of the NPDA Tournament Rules shall be the providence of the Tournament Director in consultation with the **Tournament Director Rules and Standards committee**.
4. **Appeals of decisions made by the tournament director will be directed to the National Championship Tournament Ombudsperson.**

Change #15: Empowering the National Championship Tournament Ombudsperson

Summary: This policy describes the National Championship Tournament Ombudsperson's role in hearing appeals of decisions by judges or the tournament director. The policy limits the timeframe in which appeals may be made and further describes the National Championship Tournament Committee's role in interpreting and apply the Rules of Debating and Judging.

Rationale: Most of this proposal is aimed at clarifying existing rule enforcement policies and further describing the role of the Ombudsperson (being created by a Constitutional amendment submitted to the membership by mail ballot). The addition of a time limit on appeals is a crucial move needed to keep the tournament moving forward. In previous years, appeals of decisions made by judges or tournament directors were sometimes made several rounds after the decision prompting the appeal. These delays had the effect of limiting options for remediation, possibly changing the nature of the bracket for pairing rounds, and interminably delaying rounds as late appeals were resolved at inopportune moments. While it is clear that not all appeals can be heard immediately upon their being lodged, prompt reporting of concerns increases the probability of an efficient and fair disposition of these complaints.

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3. **All appeals pertaining to tournament rules in a particular round must be made before the beginning of the subsequent round.**
4. Enforcement of all other sections of the NPDA Tournament Rules shall be the providence of the Tournament Director in consultation with the **Championship Tournament Committee** ~~the Rules and Standards Committee~~.

Supplemental Event

Change #16: Creation of a Consolation Event

The National Championship Tournament Operating Procedures shall add Section K, if necessary, to implement the following proposal.

Proposal: Create a final day consolation event for debaters not participating in the final day of debate.

Background: Currently, debaters who do not advance to the double-octofinal round have nothing to do at the tournament until the awards ceremony. This creates a situation where debaters can watch some rounds but usually end up sightseeing or wanting to do something else. This then means that many judges are pulled away from judging out rounds because their teams are not participating in the tournament. While we do not want to discourage individuals from visiting the host city or watching elimination rounds, for those debaters who wish to continue developing their public speaking and debate skills, a consolation event could prove to be a welcome opportunity. Additionally, with a consolation event, more judges are committed to judge and can be mixed with the NPDA elimination rounds to create more diverse panels.

The National Forensics League offers consolation events for competitors who are not participating in elimination rounds. This provides additional educational opportunities for students.

Rationale: Students will gain additional debate experience and education by participating in the consolation event. It also provides programs a second event to anticipate entering students who may be unlikely to advance to the final day of elimination rounds. It makes attending the NPDA national championship tournament more attractive by increasing the opportunities for debating.

Details:

Many details could be ironed out over the next year as long as the overall goal is accepted.