

**Agenda -- NPDA Business Meeting
November, 2001
Friday, 6:30, Hilton in Atlanta, GA**

Officer's Reports and Announcements
Old Business

- a. A constitutional amendment to change proxy voting procedure.

Amend Article VI: Annual Business Meeting of the Association, Section 3.

Current text: No member institution represented at a Business Meeting may vote more than 10 proxies in addition to its own vote.

Proposed change: No member institution represented at a Business Meeting may vote more than 2 proxies in addition to its own vote.

Justification: Representatives should be party to the discussion and debate on important business. This encourages participation in national business.

--John Meany, Claremont College

- b. An amendment to eliminate a second randomly paired debate.

An amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures.
Section F. Scheduling of the Debates.
Subsection 2. Randomly paired debates.

Current text: The first two debates shall be paired randomly except that care shall be taken to ensure that teams from the same geographic regions do not meet.

Proposed change: The first debate shall be paired randomly.

Justification: The tournament should pair debates to appropriately set the elimination round bracket. A second randomly paired debate increases pairing inequities. A debate team, for example, may debate two late-elimination round teams in the first two debates and another, like-situated team may debate two relatively inexperienced teams. The tournament should reduce this sort of inequity with a single randomly paired debate.

In addition, the tournament should do away with any pairing restriction based on geographic diversity. This might have been meaningful in the early days of parliamentary debating, when debate teams rarely debated teams from outside their local area. Today, it is quite common to travel and debate schools from around the country at many tournaments. In addition, the national tournament offers considerable geographic diversity in the pool of attending institutions. Debaters experience geographic diversity of opposing teams during the eight preliminary rounds of competition. The tournament should have pairings determined by the performance of individual teams rather than the geographical location of their school.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

- c. An amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures.
Section F. Scheduling of the Debates.
Subsection 3. Power-matching. Subsection (a).

Current text: Rounds 3-8 will be power matched based on each team's cumulative record through the previous round.

Proposed change: Rounds 2-8 will be power matched based on each team's cumulative record through the previous round.

Justification: Corollary to previously listed proposed change, providing a power matched round in the second round of the tournament.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

- d. An amendment to increase the number of judge strikes.

An amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures.
Section G. Judge Assignment. Subsection 2.

Current text: Each team will be allowed to strike a limited number of judges from the pool. This number will be determined in advance by the tournament director. These strikes will take effect as soon as possible after they are received by the tabulation staff.

Proposed change. Each team will be allowed to strike at least 25% of the judging pool. The percentage will be determined in advance by the tournament director. These strikes will take effect for all preliminary and elimination debates.

Justification: Tabulating software will allow a significant number of strikes without interfering with judge assignment for debates. The proposed increase in the number of strikes will improve judge accountability and reduce team-judge conflict and, at the same time, provide a large and diverse judging pool for random assignment in debates. In addition, the strikes will be available for the duration of the tournament. There is no reason to have a strike list in effect for a portion of the tournament. This creates inequity (e.g., some teams are randomly assigned struck judges and other teams avoid struck judges in initial preliminary debates). If necessary, the judging pool can be posted electronically, in advance of the tournament, to participating schools or the parliamentary debate listserv, such that all judge strikes can be coded prior to tournament registration (perhaps this can be done or is being done for this year's event). Striking prior to registration guarantees that time pressure is not a reason to delay the implementation of strike lists at the tournament.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

e. An amendment for judge certification.

An amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures.
Section H. Enforcement of Tournament Rules. Subsection (1).

Current text: 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).

Proposed change: 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). To ensure appropriate enforcement of the established rules, each school attending the national tournament must certify, with its registration materials for the tournament, that each listed judge from its school has read and is familiar with the rules of the national tournament and is willing to abide by the rules. The tournament director and/or local host will certify hired judges. Such certification indicates that the judge has received a copy of the tournament rules, participated in a comprehensive judge training session, or has become familiar with the rules in some other manner. Uncertified judges may not cover team entries.

Justification: It is not possible to "enforce" rules with which one has limited familiarity. Many judges at the national and other tournaments are unaware of the rules. It is important for judges to know the rules to fairly adjudicate contests.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

f. An amendment to promote clash in debates.

An amendment to Bylaw XIII: Tournament Rules. Rules of Debating and Judging.
Section 2. Objective of the debate.

Current text: The opposition must oppose the resolution and/or the proposition team's case. If, at the end of the debate, the judge believes that the proposition team has supported and successfully defended the resolution, they will be declared the winner; otherwise the opposition will be declared the winner.

Proposed change: The opposition must oppose the proposition team's case. If, at the end of the debate, the judge believes that the proposition team has supported and successfully defended the resolution, as interpreted, they will be declared the winner; otherwise the opposition will be declared the winner.

Justification: These changes will promote clash in the debate, The current language presumes a resolution existing independently of its interpretation by the proposition team. The proposed language change suggests that the resolution does not have a fixed meaning prior to

contextualization by the proposition team. In addition, the changes promote clash by directing opposition argument to the proposition case rather than to a different understanding or interpretation of the resolution. As any statement may have myriad reasonable interpretations, as well as other interpretations that are contradictory, foolish, or maniacal, the claim that the opposition could debate any of these, rather than the presumably sensible position advanced by the proposition team in a debate, undermines the purpose of adversarial argumentation.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

g. An amendment to eliminate points of order and privilege.

An amendment to Bylaw XIII: Tournament Rules. Rules of Debating and Judging. Section 4. During the Debate. Subsection (4F) Points of Order and subsection (4G) points of Personal Privilege.

Current text: 4F. Points of Order

Points of order can be raised for no reason other than those specified in these Rules of Debating and Judging. If at any time during the debate, a debater believes that his or her opponent has violated one of these Rules of Debating and Judging, he or she may address the Speaker of the House with a point of order. Once recognized by the Speaker of the House, the debater must state, but may not argue for, the point of order. At the discretion of the Speaker of the House, the accused may briefly respond to the point of order. The Speaker of the House will then rule immediately on the point of order in one of three ways: point well taken, point not well taken, or point taken under consideration. The time used to state and address a point of order will not be deducted from the speaking time of the debater with the floor. A point of order is a serious charge and should not be raised for minor violations.

4G. Points of Personal Privilege

At any time during the debate, a debater may rise to a point of personal privilege when he or she believes that an opponent has personally insulted one of the debaters, has made an offensive or tasteless comment, or has grievously misconstrued another's words or arguments. The Speaker will then rule on whether or not the comments were acceptable. The time used to state and address a point of personal privilege will not be deducted from the speaking time of the debater with the floor. Like a point of order, a point of personal privilege is a serious charge and should not be raised for minor transgressions. Debaters may be penalized for raising spurious points of personal privilege.

Proposed change: Delete the language.

Justification: These points are almost always "taken under consideration." In other words, they are merely disruptive of the proceedings and are not subject to an immediate ruling from the chair. This is even more the case in elimination rounds, in which a speaker is unlikely to speak for the other judges on a panel. In addition, if the speaker of a multiparty panel does try to include other judges in the deliberation or commentary of a point, the inclusion of 3 or more voices during a debater's speech, particularly a rebuttal, is so extraordinarily disruptive of the flow of the speech that an opposing team tactically 'wins' many points, even when the ruling is

not in their favor.

These points cause considerable confusion in the debate. A debater does not often know how to proceed on arguments that are "taken under consideration." Debaters do not know if they ought to counter _every_ instance of a potentially new argument in a rebuttal speech. If they do not counter an argument with a point of order, does this mean the judge should not recognize it as a new argument? If they counter two new arguments in a rebuttal with points of order, are they unable to make more points (and, perhaps, seem disruptive) or will the judge presume that the team is conceding that other issues are not new to the debate? And, in replying, for example, that a point is "well taken," is a judge indicating that no other argumentation can be made on the point or only that the present articulation of the argument seems new? Points of privilege are even more infrequently used and almost exclusively disruptive, having little to do with the substance of a debate.

It seems that debaters ought to advance arguments in their speeches and judges can 'take into consideration' anything that is relevant for decision-making at the conclusion of the debate without the intrusion of frequently unnecessary and often confusing points of order and privilege.
--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

h. An amendment to provide additional information regarding tournament success.

An amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures. Section I. Awards. Subsection (6) Season Sweepstakes.

Add an additional subsection (d) with the following language:

The NPDA will certify sweepstakes results, based on the criteria outlined in the NPDA Constitution, Article VII, in each of the following categories: Overall, Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Novice. The NPDA will publish a sweepstakes ranking of the top twenty-five (25) schools and the top ten (10) two-year colleges on the NPDA website.

Justification: This sweepstakes certification increases the information with which programs are able to provide promotional information, both within a college or university and to outside individuals and groups. It provides recognition for students in their competitive divisions. It increase the number of recognized schools, an important consideration as the organization continue to expand. It will not increase costs, as there is no formal award other than official sanction by the NPDA of annual rankings.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

i. An amendment to create a judge training session.

Amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures. Section (A) Tournament Staff.

Proposed addition:

It is the responsibility of the tournament director to establish a time and location for judge

training during the administration of the national tournament. The tournament director will select one or more representatives to conduct training sessions regarding tournament rules. Participating judges must attend the training session to judge at the tournament. If a judge has previously participated in a training session at the national tournament, the judge may receive a waiver for future training sessions, with the exception of a training seminar for any rules changes from the previous training session. Schools are responsible for hiring judges to replace any of their judges failing to attend the training session.

Justification: This procedure will familiarize judges with the rules for the national tournament and permit questions and exploration of the scope of established rules.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

j. An amendment with regard to judges.

Amendment to Bylaw XII: Tournament Operating Procedures. Section (G) Judge Assignment. All adults ineligible to compete at the national tournament are eligible to judge the event. The tournament may not make any notation on a judge or strike list indicating a special status for judges, including first year judging.

Justification: This will allow qualified individuals to judge at the national tournament, without discriminatory status references (e.g., "first year out" or "Irish").

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

k. An amendment with regard to tournament disclosure.

An amendment to Bylaw XIII: Tournament Rules. Rules of Debating and Judging. Section 5. After the Debate.

Proposed addition: After the completion of tabulation for each preliminary round of debate and the announcement of the subsequent preliminary round of debate, for round 1-7, the tournament director or designated representative will post the win/loss and individual speaker results of the preceding debates, in a conveniently located room or public space.

Justification: This addition will provide tabulation transparency for the event, increasing accountability, improving communication about practice, and providing a secondary check on results accuracy.

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

l. An amendment with regard to judge decision disclosure.

An amendment to Bylaw XIII: Tournament Rules. Rules of Debating and Judging. Section 5. After the Debate.

Proposed change: Delete sections 5a, 5b, and 5c.

Current text:

5A. After the final rebuttal, the Speaker of the House will dismiss the teams, complete the ballot and return it to the tournament director. The judges should not give oral comments before the ballot is completed and returned to the tournament director.

5B. After returning the ballot, the judge may, at his or her discretion, give brief constructive comments to the debaters. Judges should refrain from announcing the decision. After these comments, debaters and coaches will refrain from seeking further information about the debate from the judge.

5C. Debaters or coaches will refrain from requesting that judges reveal decisions. Debaters or coaches who harass judges for information may be withdrawn from the tournament on a two-thirds vote of the Tournament Committee.

Amended wording: At the completion of each preliminary and elimination round of debate, judges are required to verbally announce their decision. The judge will be given a three minute period of time to explain the decision of the debate. Immediately following the announcement of the timed three minute period, judges must return ballots to the tabulation staff. Judges may engage debaters regarding decisions after ballots are delivered to the tournament staff. Judges must announce decisions but debaters are under no obligation to listen to decisions. Debaters may be excused from the competition room at their request prior to the announcement of the decision. Students and Coaches should avoid harassing critics regarding decisions.

Justification: Decision disclosure is a tool for judge education and consistent decision-making; a guide for improved practice for participants; a move to open communication in a critical community; a legitimate check on unaccountable decision-making; a needed secondary check on tournament tabulations; and a means to promote fairness in disclosure (a method to eliminate problematic 'selective' disclosure).

--John Meany, Claremont Colleges

3. New Business

a. Proposal to make President's Reception Optional

Proposal: In Bylaws XIII A 3 b change "shall" to "may."

Justification: for logistical reasons, to help the tournament flow smoothly, the Tournament Director and Host have proposed eliminating the President's Reception this year. The above change would enable that plan.

--Tom Kuster, Bethany Lutheran College

- b. Proposal to permit engaging "public" or "celebrity" judges for semi-final and final rounds

Proposal: Add to Bylaws XI G Judge Assignment a new section 6. "None of the above shall preclude engaging a number of qualified "public" judges, prominent members of the intellectual community who are not necessarily coaches or former debaters, who would join judging panels in semi-final and final rounds. Such judges will be identified to participating debaters prior to the start of the tournament and will submit statements describing their background and philosophy. They will be suitably trained and oriented to our debate procedures in advance of their judging. Such judges will not exceed in number 40% of any judging panel. These judges may not be stricken by any team."

Justification/Logistics: If approved by the membership, here is a way to proceed.

1. The local host and local staff (with suggestions from others) will brainstorm a list of 20 or so suitable prominent citizens who are either near the host site or who might be persuaded to be there for this occasion. The list would include addresses and other needed contact information.
2. The Tournament Director and the NPDA president will draft and co-sign letters of invitation to these persons in some order of priority, until we have an appropriate number of acceptances.
3. The Tournament Director will appoint a "public judge hospitality committee" (that is, a judge training committee) whose task will be to prepare these judges BEFORE the tournament, and to greet and accompany them AT the tournament in a manner befitting their status. Besides showing them hospitality, the goal of this committee is to assure everyone - both the judges themselves and competitors - that these judges understand their task and can do a good job. The "hospitality committee" will ask each public judge to do such things as...
 - read orientation materials about parli rules and procedures including basic decision principles ("not your belief, but who debated better," etc.)
 - arrive at least one round early to witness a tournament debate prior to the one they judge
 - visit for a half hour or so with two or three select experienced judges, discussing their taskThe committee would also be charged with developing a questionnaire to produce a "judging philosophy" from these judges.
4. The care and nurture of the public judges would be turned over to the hospitality committee, who will make sure they are well oriented.

5. The function and identities of the public judges will be well publicized to all participants prior to the tournament.
6. The NPDA publications committee will be asked to take steps to maximize the favorable publicity the tournament might obtain from the engagement of these well-known judges.

Reasons supporting this proposal:

1. It highlights what we are. NPDA promotes parliamentary debate, an academic activity that prepares students well for engaging in public discourse, and we can demonstrate that powerfully by engaging able public critics in our most important rounds. Public discourse is what we (NPDA) do.
2. It enriches the climax of our tournament, adding another dimension of challenge and excitement to the closing rounds for both debaters and audience.
3. It builds bridges between academe and the community, and in particular between our activity and the "public dialogue" - our best debaters become better known "out there," and our activity demonstrates its relevance to the ongoing discussion of public issues in the real world.
4. In a ripple effect, NPDA debaters throughout the tournament - perhaps throughout the season - must give more thought to how they can be effective before such judges.
5. It encourages the continuance of an important NPDA tradition. Cf. early constitution which called for significant numbers of non-coach judges at all tournaments.
6. It would fuel endless and fascinating discussions regarding how and why ballots split between and among public and coach judges - and after a while, if the custom continued, even provide a body of data useful in evaluating how we are doing as an educational activity.
7. The PR possibilities could be significant. Would this help us get the attention (that we deserve) from C-Span? CNN? The national weeklies? Certainly we would be more interesting to newspapers, not only in host cities but in the home communities of participating teams.