

Memorandum to Participants, Coaches, and Judges

March 31, 2019

Please read all of the enclosed information, *carefully*.

Item **#1** - Contestants

All contestants must prepare one “Morning Hour” speech. They will deliver this speech during Session 1. The “Morning Hour” is inspired by time in the U.S. House of Representatives, and our contestants will give one compelling speech discussing issues pertinent to their state/region, ideology, etc.

Considerations for judging:

- ✓ The speech is a **soapbox**, and may indicate the **imperative need to solve a problem, may or may not indicate a solution, may attempt to change attitudes on an issue, or may simply raise awareness.**
- ✓ Legislators may acknowledge correlative points made by peers, but the focal point for the speech is not necessarily direct clash/debate with other speakers.
- ✓ Students may employ more rhetorical strategies, stylistic devices, or even creative risks in these speeches that may slightly deviate, surpass, and vary from the traditional decorum/style of congressional debate speeches.
- ✓ This should not simply be a “recycled” speech on past debate on legislation. Be innovative!
- ✓ **Answers** during the two-minute direct questioning period should be considered by the judge, inasmuch as how well the student can defend the position advanced in the speech.
- ✓ The Parliamentarian will serve as Presiding Officer during this session and will select speakers and questioners.

Item **#2** - Coaches & Judges

- Please double-check judges in Tabroom.com to make sure their **cell phone** is listed.
- All judges will need to fill out a new Congressional Debate Judge Information page

at: <https://forms.gle/7qFXZhH5pE7UTQoX6>

or scan here:



Even if you filled out this form last year, please fill it out again so that we may include your information in this year’s judge paradigm packet.

Item **#3** - Contestants & Coaches

We will post chamber assignments in the **Classroom Building** (first floor) Saturday morning. All chambers should be in this building. The postings will include tentative judge assignments, and we also will post a copy of judge profiles online for contestants to peruse. Contestants always should ask judges to introduce themselves, in case the tournament makes last-minute substitutions.

Item **#4** - Coaches & Judges

All judges are expected to attend the judge meeting at **8:15 a.m. Saturday** morning in **CB118**, unless they have made prior arrangements to be in the judging pool at a later time. Materials will be distributed at this meeting.

Direct Questioning Format

All cross examination will follow the direct questioning format. All Morning Hour speeches will have 2 minutes, while all other debate will follow standard questioning timing rules. All questioning periods are broken into 30-second segments, with one questioner per segment, who may ask multiple questions of the speaker during that segment. Additionally:

- ✓ The PO must keep a separate questioning recency (to ensure equal opportunity for legislators to ask questions), and should promptly adjudicate the end of each 30-second period.
- ✓ If a questioner does not use her/his full 30 seconds, the presiding officer has the discretion to call on another speaker, or absorb the time.
- ✓ No suspensions of the rules to extend questioning are permitted.
- ✓ Questioners may not prefer questions with information external to the speaker's remarks.
- ✓ Questioners may interrupt a speaker during his/her response, but the manner in which they do so is subject to critique by judges – remember, this is Congress – there is a standard of decorum and courtesy that members should be held to!

Questioners should strive to expose flaws in the speaker's arguments by asking a series of questions about the speaker's remarks. These questions should subject the speaker's arguments to intensive and focused scrutiny. There should be no "softball questions." The segment is for asking questions; not for making new arguments or rehash old arguments. Questions and answers should be concise and to the point. To that end, questioners may politely interrupt speakers during their responses when, for instance, they ramble or do not directly answer the question.

Direct Questioning Judging Considerations: Speakers always should be evaluated on how well they answer questions, and this should factor into the score for each speech. There also is a space on the evaluation sheet for judges to comment on the quality of questions asked, which should factor into the holistic ranking of legislators at the end of the session.

Evaluation of Speakers:

- ✓ Brevity of responses (short and clear, to the point)
- ✓ Non-evasiveness (is the speaker answering the question being asked?)
- ✓ Quality of argument defense (does the speaker successfully defend his/her argument?)

Evaluation of Questioners:

- ✓ Coherence and relevance of questioning line (are questions connected? Do they expose flaws in arguments?)
- ✓ Brevity of questions (short and clear, to the point)
- ✓ Quality of follow-up questions (is the questioner responsive to the speaker's initial responses in the CX segment?)
- ✓ Quality of argument scrutiny (does the questioner successfully probe or poke holes in the speaker's arguments?)
- ✓ Degree of courtesy and decorum in necessary interruptions

Evaluation of the PO:

- ✓ Adherence to time guidelines (does the PO enforce the 30 second limit?)
- ✓ Fairness in calling on questioners (fairly distribute opportunities among those who want to ask questions?)

NSDA rules allowing for laptop computers (inclusive of tablets/iPads) in debate events applies to the TOC, with exceptions indicated below. Judges will monitor students and may elect to penalize violators or students using their laptops for non- Congress related business in chambers by choosing not to rank them, as well as deduct points. Serious infractions will be reported to the tab room. The University of Kentucky does not guarantee access to their network or stable, consistent connections, nor will they provide tech support during the tournament.

Guidelines for Laptop Use in Congressional Debate – TOC

- A. Computers may be used to access the Internet for the purposes of research during the Congressional Debate session. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to communicate directly or indirectly with any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs (e.g. a coach researching and leaving evidence in your Dropbox or Drive during the session for you to retrieve, receiving a message directing you on where to find evidence, etc.). Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside of the competition room are prohibited.
- B. Penalty: Contestants found to have violated provision A will be disqualified from the tournament and will forfeit all rounds and NSDA points.
- C. Availability of Evidence: Contestants electing to use computers have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically, but must be provided in a format readable by the opponent and the judge.
- D. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords, and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts will not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants.
- E. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the scorers while speaking.
- F. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure. Judges and/or contest directors will give no special consideration or accommodation, including no additional speech time or prep time, should equipment failure occur.
- G. By choosing to use laptop computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

2019 Schedule

Revised March 31, 2019. Changes for 2019 are highlighted.

Saturday, April 27

8:15am Chambers Released & Judge Briefing
 9:00am-11:00am Session 1 (*Morning Hour*)
 11:00am-12:00pm Lunch
 12:00pm-3:00pm Session 2
 4:00pm-7:00pm Session 3

Sunday, April 28

8:15am-11:15am Session 4
 11:15am-12:30pm Lunch
 12:45pm-Assembly (*CB118*)
 1:00pm-4:00pm Semifinal Session 1
 4:30pm-7:30pm Semifinal Session 2

Monday, April 29 (Embassy Suites)

9:00am Final Session (*Room TBA*)
 1:30pm Final Session Adjourns
 Awards begin 1 hour after final gavel

Rules

- Chamber assignments will be released Saturday morning, posted on the main floor of the *White Hall Classroom Building*. Students are issued school *codes*, and should not reveal their school identity publicly in a chamber. This maintains the integrity of competition, and allows judges to write codes on evaluation sheets to assist Tab staff in sorting them after sessions.
- For each session, a presiding officer is elected, precedence and recency reset, and debate on legislation may not carry over. Once elected, presiding officers may not step down to speak.
- All speeches, except in finals, are 3 minutes, with a 2-minute questioning period for sponsor and first negative speeches, and 1 minute for subsequent speeches. **Direct questioning**, in 30-second blocks, will be used for all speeches in all sessions.
- A chamber may not speak three times consecutively on the same side. After two consecutive speeches without an opposing speech, the PO must move to Previous Question if no student is prepared with a speech in opposition. This is not to merely “frown on one-sided debate” nor reference “cycles.” This is about keeping debate fresh and clash-worthy. Students should not assume they are guaranteed a speech on each legislation; they should **be prepared on all docket items**.
- Students are permitted to access the Internet during the session **for research purposes only**. Direct or indirect electronic communication with a coach or other person during the session is prohibited. The TOC makes no guarantee of Internet access.

Preliminary Session

- There will be **ten** preliminary chambers of **14** students each. Two judges are assigned in rotation to each chamber, as well as one designated parliamentarian. Each judge ranks eight (8) contestants (presiding officers are eligible). After Session 4, the parliamentarian selects the best presiding officer (PO) from among the three who served in the preliminary sessions – to advance to semifinals. The remaining **four (4)** top delegates in each chamber – based on lowest rank totals – advance to the semifinal session.
- Of the **10** Presiding Officers who are selected by the Parliamentarian, six will be chosen to preside in semifinals. The remaining **four** will advance, but will not serve. The top six will be chosen on the basis of total points received from the scorers and parliamentarian during their time presiding, with ties broken by total cumulative ranking in chamber.
- MORNING HOUR** (Session 1): legislators address an issue of importance to themselves or their constituents.
 - Legislators have three (3) minutes to deliver morning hour speeches. The topic may be of national concern or a state/local problem that Congress has the ability to remedy. The topic of the speech may not be the same as any legislation scheduled for debate at the TOC, **nor should legislators simply deliver an old speech on a bill/resolution**. Creativity, originality, and seriousness of purpose are encouraged in the creation and delivery of a Morning Hour speech.
 - The Parliamentarian for that chamber shall serve as chair during Morning Hour. The chair recognizes each legislator once. There are no “pro/con” speeches, so after each speech the chair recognizes delegates for a two-minute, direct questioning period and calls for the next legislator who wishes to speak. Judges will consider quality of questions asked, and while friendly questions are permissible, they are discouraged in favor of more meaningful interaction. This should influence ranking, too.
 - Judges are given a modified evaluation sheet for this time period and will be briefed carefully.** Criteria include fluency of delivery, the use of persuasive evidence, etc. Each legislator is expected to demonstrate that he/she has carefully prepared for this polished presentation. Refutation of previous speakers is permissible, but not required. For example, a speaker who gives a speech in favor of a policy may respond to a previous legislator’s comments opposing that same policy. **Effective analysis of unique topics not often found in Congressional Debate, such as highly localized issues, should be rewarded.**

Semifinal Session

- There will be three semifinal chambers of **16-17** students each. Two scorers are assigned each session to each chamber, as well as a parliamentarian. Each judge ranks eight (8) contestants (inclusive of presiding officers). The highest-quality PO, as selected by the parliamentarian, shall advance to finals. The remaining top four (4) contestants in each chamber shall advance to finals. In the session where the PO candidate does not preside, they may debate.
- Two of the six serving POs will be assigned to each chamber, and the parliamentarian shall flip a coin to determine which session each presides. Precedence and recency reset for each semifinal session.

Final Session

- Finals shall consist of 15 students, three of whom are the top PO advanced from each semifinal chamber. At least three judges (one designated parliamentarian) rank eight (8) contestants (in finals, **exclusive** of presiding officers).
- Speeches are **four minutes**, with the same questioning parameters used throughout the tournament.
- Each of the three POs shall serve for eight floor speeches, and may not give a speech during the final session. Each PO will draw a random number to determine order of presiding. The champion presiding officer shall be selected based on *judge ranking in the final round*, with ties broken by the final session parliamentarian’s rank. The runner-up final session POs will be recognized as “Presiding Officer Finalists.”
- There will be 24 speeches total. Each student may speak a maximum of twice. The session will end at 2:30 pm, or whenever all students have reached their maximum speeches, whichever comes first. Placement of the top six speaking contestants shall be calculated in the same manner as advancement is described above. Remaining students are honored as finalists.

Procedures

The following rules are designed to promote procedural unity among the chambers. They cannot be altered or ignored by a chamber through the use of a motion to suspend the rules.

1. **DECORUM:** The PO is responsible for enforcing proper decorum. Moving to suspend the rules for an open chamber is out-of-order at the TOC.
2. Each session constitutes its own legislative day, however, for NSDA merit points, each *calendar* day has a recording limit of 24 points. ***Debate on legislation may not be carried from one session to the next, so each session must conclude with orders of the day, where students vote on legislation.***
3. **RECOGNITION OF SPEAKERS:** There is some question as to recent trends that attempt to “randomize” recognition before precedence and recency are set (such as “Activity” or “Longest Standing”). Those are now illegal as per NSDA rules. It is entirely acceptable for a PO to simply say s/he will randomly call on speakers. The PO’s recognition method is subject to critique by judges. Seating charts, precedence and recency reset for each session (including each semifinal session). Following earlier sessions, POs may take speaking order from previous sessions into account, and may even employ a “reverse recency,” so that someone recognized late in an earlier session has the opportunity to speak earlier in a new session.
4. **QUESTIONING:** The PO recognizes legislators who wish to question a speaker using the ***direct questioning*** guidelines. The PO should strive to be equitable and fair, and the parliamentarian will monitor for flagrant abuse.
5. **AGENDA ORDER:** Each chamber will establish its own agenda order by majority vote.
6. **OPENING DEBATE:** Whomever begins debate on legislation *introduces* that item to the chamber. Since none of the legislation in the docket has been submitted by contestants, the PO will recognize a SPONSOR based on *recency*; this sponsor is held to the standard two-minute questioning period under any session.
7. **VOTING:** The PO determines the method of voting on each question before the chamber. Notes on voting:
 - a. Final votes on legislation, amendments, and motions to appeal the chair require a recorded vote.
 - b. Voice voting is acceptable for all other votes, but a recorded vote must be taken if any one legislator calls for a division of the chamber.
 - c. A roll call vote is not permitted, since voting record is not of consequence in Congressional Debate.
 - d. ALL simple majority votes are based upon the number of legislators PRESENT and VOTING in the chamber; therefore, the PO does not need to call for or count abstentions. For all votes requiring a fraction of the chamber to agree to a motion or question (2/3, 1/3, 1/5, etc.), the chair determines whether the chamber agrees with the motion/question using the number of legislators PRESENT in the chamber. Because of this system, the PO must track the number of legislators in the chamber at all times.
8. **AMENDMENTS:** Legislators submit amendments to the PO in writing. A motion to amend is necessary to consider the written amendment; such a motion is in order any time after the SPONSORSHIP SPEECH. Once the motion is made, the PO decides if the amendment is germane. The PO may consult with the Parliamentarian to make this decision. If the amendment is found to be NOT germane, the chair rules it OUT OF ORDER and the amendment process stops. If the chair rules the amendment germane, s/he should read the contents of the amendment to the chamber. A 1/3 second of the members PRESENT in the chamber is required to debate the amendment. If the chamber votes a second, debate on the amendment commences immediately. Legislators may move to lay on the table or move the previous question on the amendment at any time. The first speech on the amendment is a SPONSORSHIP speech. The chair determines speaker recognition for the SPONSORSHIP speech on the basis of recency; the author of the amendment is NOT guaranteed the sponsorship speech. The sponsor accepts responsibility for the mechanics of the amendment and yields to two minutes of questioning. All amendment speeches receive a score and count towards recency. A majority vote is necessary for the chamber to adopt the amendment.
9. **OVERTIME SPEECHES:** Any regular floor speech that extends more than ten (10) seconds beyond the maximum speaking time of three minutes shall be penalized one (1) full point by the Scorer(s) evaluating the session. The PO is required to keep accurate time of each speech and report it to the Scorer(s) when the speaker has finished. The Parliamentarian/Scorer(s) shall heavily penalize the PO for inaccurate timing and/or reporting. Use of time by speakers is subject to judge critique.
10. For any circumstances not specifically covered by these rules, Congressional Debate at the TOC defers to NSDA rules, then to *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised 11th Edition*.

Questions? Contact TOC Congressional Debate Tournament Administrator, Kevin Berlat • kjberlat@gmail.com