

## Speaker Scores:

### Introduction: What are speaker points?

1. In addition to deciding which team won the debate round, judges also rate debaters individually by assigning speaker points (speaks) to each debater and then ranking them from best to worst in the round.
2. Higher speaker scores are better, and lower ranks are better. Speaker scores range from approximately 5 to approximately 45, though there is some flexibility at the extremes for truly exceptional (or exceptionally awful) speeches. Ranks are the ordinal ranking of each debater in the round, from 1 (best) to 4 (worst).
3. Speaker points and ranks indicate what each debater contributed individually to winning (or failing to win) the round. The debater who did the best job demonstrating that their side should win should receive the highest speaks and the lowest ranks.
  - a. For this reason, there are no “low-point wins.” A team that lost, by definition, did less to win the round, and thus the speaker score of how much they did to win the round must be equal or lesser.
  - b. Speaker scores do not exist to reward or reflect the debaters who spoke with the most pleasing rhetorical style.

### Describing the Speaker Scale

1. The speaker scale ranges from 5 (awful) to 45 (amazing) with most speeches clustering around a 25. A 25 is considered an average speech.
  - a. Keep in mind that an average speech is probably good.
  - b. Given that the majority of debaters on the circuit have been debating for quite a while, you shouldn't expect a speech to score above a 25 simply because it was not bad. Use the information in the table below to guide you in assigning speaker scores.
2. The speaker scale often allows judges to assign scores in increments of 1 to create more variation between speakers.
3. Speaker points below 5 and above 45 are discouraged, but permitted. Speaker points below 10 and above 40 must be justified to the tab staff (the people who run the tournament). Essentially, you need to justify why this person should receive that score, because the default presumption is that it is unlikely that the score is deserved.
  - a. Speaker points below 5 are reserved for significant misbehavior and rule violations. If someone verbally abused the judge and their opponents, or frequently interrupted their opponents' speeches, they could receive speaker points below a 5. This is intended to be punitive, because such behavior should cause a team to automatically lose.
  - b. Speaker points above a 45 require the speaker to have given one of the best speeches any debater will give all year. The number of 45+ speeches given all year can usually be counted on one hand, and thus requires the judge to have high confidence this is such a speech.
4. Scores are described below as guidance. Keep in mind that scores, reflecting a debater's contribution to winning the round, are most often constrained by the a speech's limiting factor (warranting/impacting/weighing/engagement/argumentation quality) rather than the strongest.

Criteria	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45
<i>Warrant quality</i>	Warrants for this debater's claims were either nonexistent or providing little to no reason to believe the underlying claim, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims were either nonexistent or providing little to no reason to believe the underlying claim, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims provided little to no reason to believe the underlying claim, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims provided only limited reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims provided substantial, but not decisive, reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims provided nearly decisive reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims provided decisive reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims, absent opposing warrants from the other team.	Warrants for this debater's claims provided decisive reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims in isolation, and whenever possible decisive in the context of opposing warrants from the other team.	In addition, these speeches or this speech was able to select and deploy argumentation, warranting, impacting, and weighing so effectively that the judge has near-certain confidence both that:
<i>Impact quality</i>	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were either non-existent, vague to the point of being unweighable, or predicated on unwarranted claims.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were either non-existent, vague to the point of being unweighable, or predicated on unwarranted claims.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were clearly connected to warranting, but vague or difficult to understand as offense in places.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were clearly connected to warranting, but difficult to precisely determine and their importance was somewhat vague.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were clearly connected to warranting, even if at places the precise degree or kind of impact was unclear.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were clearly connected to warranting, with an explanation of the degree or kind of impact where most crucial.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were clearly connected to warranting, with consistent explanation of the degree and kind.	Impacts of the claims this debater put forward were clear, including the degree or kind of impact, and carefully tailored to match the weighing so as to clearly establish the RFD.	1. If debating against a team with two debaters who gave flawless speeches, this speech could have made up for the flaws in a partner's 35-level speech to the point of
<i>Weighing quality</i>	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts in this round either was not done by this debater, or merely asserted.	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts in this round either was not done by this debater, or merely asserted.	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts in this round either was not done by this debater, or merely asserted.	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts in this round was something that this debater did only partially, and with	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts in this round was something that this debater did completely, albeit with	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts and importance of specific impacts within each kind was something that	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts and importance of specific impacts within each kind was something that	Weighing the relative importance of kinds of impacts and importance of specific impacts within each kind was something that	

				insufficient justification.	insufficient justification.	this debater did completely, albeit with insufficient justification.	this debater did completely, with reasonable, although limited, justification.	this debater did completely, with fully developed justification.	winning the round. 2. There is no conceivable world where with a partner that would speak a 36, two flawless speeches from the other team could have defeated the team of this debater.
<i>Engagement</i>	Crucial, round-winning material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	Crucial, round-winning material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	Some potentially round-winning material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	Some important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, but more engagement with that material would certainly have increased their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, but more engagement with that material is likely to have increased their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, nor was more engagement with that material likely to have substantially increased their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, nor would more engagement with that material have substantially increased their team's ability to win.	
<i>Argument quality</i>	The judge has high confidence that the existence of this debater's speech/speeches did more to help the other side win than no speech/ speeches being given (silence in the place of what occurred) would have.	The judge has a best estimate that the existence of this debater's speech/speeches is that they did no more to help their side win than the other side win, a net effect equivalent to no speech/ speeches being given (silence in the place of what occurred).	The judge believes that the quality of argumentation in general - argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing - was weak enough that it could not withstand reasonable scrutiny.	The judge believes that the quality of argumentation in general - argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing - would be unable to withstand substantial, quality argumentation from the other team.	The judge believes that the quality of argumentation in general - argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing - was strong despite exploitable flaws.	The judge believes that the quality of argumentation in general - argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing - was strong with minimal exploitable flaws.	The judge believes that the quality of argumentation in general - argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing - was strong with no clearly exploitable flaws.	The judge believes that the quality of argumentation in general - argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing - was strong with no exploitable flaws.	