

# Basic DEBATE Judging Information

## Being the Judge

Check-in: As soon as you “arrive” at the tournament it is important to check-in to the designated Zoom room for your event to let the tabroom know you have arrived. Also, you can ask them any questions you may have about the tournament schedule or your commitment. You must judge the round you are assigned.

Electronic Balloting: All ballots will be submitted on Tabroom.com. Information on how to participate has been provided in your registration information. Ask the school you are representing for more information or help registering. An electronic device capable of accessing the internet is needed. (Laptops and tablets are preferred, smartphones are also capable but not recommended if you have a laptop/tablet)

Judge Demeanor: It is important to be a supportive audience member, even online. Judges are encouraged to present a positive and attentive attitude to each speaker. Having your camera on so that students can see your non-verbal cues is not mandatory, but is highly appreciated. Please give the students your undivided attention. Try to avoid distractions such as texting or using your computer for other activities during debates.

Silence Computers and Phones: Please remember to mute yourself you are not speaking and silence all cell phones before you begin speaking and please remind all students to do likewise.

### Materials you will need:

- Timer / Stopwatch / Phone (to time the speeches)
- Pens (to take notes)
- Paper or notepad (to take notes during the debate round)
- Specific instructions (for the debate event that you are judging)
- Electronic Device (Laptop/Tablet/Smartphone so you can participate in e-balloting on Tabroom)

## Getting Started

Start on Time: Start the round as close to the designated starting time as possible. Do not wait for every student to show up before beginning the round as some students may be entered in more than one event per round.

## During the Round

Timing the speakers: Observe all time requirements and limits according to each event. See event descriptions for specific time lengths and which events require verbal/nonverbal time signals. The students will be timing themselves as well.

## Ballots

Located on Tabroom.com: Once you are logged into your account, click your email in the upper right hand corner. If you have a ballot assigned to you, this is where it will appear. Be sure to fill it out correctly and completely.

Comments: At the end of each debate, you are allowed to disclose and explain your decision and give feedback. You may also type notes into your ballot on Tabroom. Some comments to include: What did the speakers do well? What do they still need to work on? Ballots are not only used to help determine the rankings for this particular tournament, but they are used as a tool to educate students. Therefore, your comments are greatly appreciated. You should plan to write during each speech as well as briefly after the speech. Remember time is of the essence.

Ranking the Round: After observing the round, the judge ranks each competitor from 1st to the number of speakers in that debate. (The best speaker in the round should receive a rank of "1," the second best speaker should receive a "2," etc.).

Reason for Decision: This statement tells the student the reason or justification for their ranking in the round. For example: If a student is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> out of six competitors, what about their performance placed them third? The students look to your comments and constructive criticism to help them to improve.

### **Judges Criteria**

Paradigm: In debate events, the students may ask you for your judging paradigm. They want to know how you will judge the round. We encourage you to provide some criteria (examples are listed below). Finally, feel free to tell them the following information if you are new to judging the activity:

“I am a \_\_\_\_ (parent, coach, college student taking courses in communication, etc.). Please make sure that you speak slowly and clearly, and don’t use jargon that you don’t explain.”

Criteria: These are the judging elements that you feel are important in weighing the performance of the participants in the round. Some of the criteria that some judges deem important are:

- Arguing on the topic of the debate while providing relevant information and (GOOD) evidence
- Making/using good arguments
- Making arguments easy to follow/ understand while free of fallacies or attacks against another
- Using speaking time efficiently and clear
- Being an overall (GOOD) speaker, listener, and critical thinker

The above list includes important speaking elements thought you, the judge, has the ultimate responsibility to determine what is most important and influential in your decision making.

Objectivity: Judge the round as fair as possible without allowing your own opinion to infiltrate your decision or interpretation of what is being shared by the students. Keep an open mind, try to avoid bias based on your personal affiliations and only take into consideration the information that the students have shared with you in the round.

### **Responsibilities of Judges**

1. Arrive on time: Be in your round at least 5-10 minutes prior to the start of each round.
2. Promptly submit the completed ballot Tabroom upon completion of the round. This is crucial.
3. Provide detailed, constructive and clear criticism at the bottom of all ballots.
4. Provide accurate time signals when necessary.
5. Evaluate all contestants in a fair, reasonable manner without regard to personal affiliations. NO BIASES!!!
6. Provide verbal commentary after the round for all competitors after the round is complete at your discretion (Check with specific event instructions or the judging director to determine if you share the judging outcome with the participants!!!).
7. Complete your judging duties by determining the win/loss decision in each debate round and awarding the appropriately earned points and rankings for each participant you observed.