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POLICIES of the
NOVA SCOTIA DEBATING SOCIETY
PRESCRIBED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Guidelines for Debate Coaches

The following Guidelines are intended to amplify upon Rule 20 of the General Rules of Debating:

1. Prior to a debating tournament or exhibition debate, debaters shall conduct their own research upon prepared topics. While coaches may suggest avenues of research to students, they must not actually carry out any research themselves. Debaters must prepare their own speeches, of course. It is proper for coaches to listen to debaters practising for a tournament and to make comments upon their delivery, argument and evidence.
2. There shall be no coaching of debaters during a debate or on a topic that may be debated again during the tournament, whether by colleagues, coaches, parents or other members of the audience. While such associates may provide debaters with reasonable moral support between debates, only debaters themselves may discuss details of debate topics or performances of debaters until the tournament is over. It is best that there be no contact between coaches and debaters during impromptu rounds.
3. It is especially improper to observe other debaters and then advise one's own debaters of the strategy, arguments or evidence of another team. Unless they are handicapped, debaters should carry their own materials to debates and coaches should not interact with their students in a manner that might intimidate opposing debaters or influence judges.
4. Not only must members of the audience not communicate with debaters during a debate by any means, they should also avoid unfairly supporting just their own team with applause, laughter, etc. in an attempt to influence the judges. A moderator may require members of an audience behaving in such a manner to leave the debate.
5. It is also highly improper for coaches or supporters of a team to try to influence judges by making loud favourable remarks to their debaters following a debate, or in any other manner. Any such comments should be made to the debaters out of earshot of judges.
6. A team which receives any unfair coaching or support such as outlined above may be disqualified by the Tournament Director or Executive Committee.

Debate Judging

1. Ideally, a debate should be adjudicated by three judges, none of whom has any association with the schools involved.

2. If that is not possible, the judges should have the least possible affiliation with the schools involved. Judges shall be assigned randomly, by computer if possible.
3. In the case of co-ordinate teams, when several schools are involved in a single debate, it may not be possible to find qualified judges with no allegiance to any of the schools. In that case, the panel of judges should be so balanced that, insofar as is possible, no school will enjoy an advantage over another.
4. When several rounds of debate are involved in a single tournament, judges should be so assigned that each debater and/or team is adjudicated by as many different judges as possible (within the limitations outlined above) and that each judge is asked to score each individual or team an equal number of times - preferably, only once - in the preliminary rounds.
5. The tournament director should ask judges, before debate begins, to declare themselves ineligible to judge a team to which they feel some commitment. It is unreasonable and unfair to ask judges to restrain their natural bias; to so request is to place them in an impossible position. Judges have been known to overcompensate for bias, to the detriment of the team to which they feel allegiance, just as some have found it impossible to set bias aside. In fairness to both judges and competitors, this situation should be avoided at all costs.

Tournament Procedures

1. In provincial championship tournaments, organizers shall lop any score which is more than two standard deviations from the average of the debater's awarded scores. Ties shall be broken by reference to the lopped scores, where possible. All rounds shall bear equal weight.
2. In team championship tournaments, the top two teams from different schools in regular round debates shall advance to the championship contest. The runner-up team shall have its choice of a topic debated during the tournament (the style being the same as in the regular rounds) and the regular round leader shall have its choice of sides.
3. In Debate Duel tournaments, all entrants shall debate each side of the topic an equal number of times during regular round competition. The top two competitors in regular round competition shall then advance to a playoff contest in which the regular round leader shall have the choice of sides. The judges of the playoff contest shall not confer to decide the winner; instead they shall simply vote using written ballots.
4. Decisions of judges shall be final and not subject to any appeal.
5. Debaters and coaches shall not publicly question or criticize the decision of a debate judge; any contravention of this policy will result in automatic suspension from further participation in Society programmes.
6. Score Sheets may be destroyed once 30 days have elapsed after the Tournament in which they are marked.