

F. Nova Scotia System for Selection of Delegates to Worlds Team Try-Outs

In the past Nova Scotia selected its candidates for the Worlds Team try-outs based on students' performances in the Provincial Championships. This year the Canadian selection tournament takes place in November, so we can't wait until the Provincials. We cannot use the Impromptu results because Grade 9s (who are eligible for the Worlds' try-outs) don't debate in the same category as the Grade 10s and 11s. So we need a new model.

The advantage of having a separate try-out is that we can use the actual style and topics used at the Worlds and we can limit the number of those trying out with the result that it is easier to compare the most talented debaters.

The following proposal is put forward by **Blair MacDonald and Brian Casey**:

1. The try-outs would be made up entirely of coordinate teams. Each debater would debate on an assigned team and speak once in each position (which would occur in an order that is pre-selected).
2. The topics for the try-out would be impromptu and non-squirreliable. The topics would be topics previously used at the World Schools tournament (or very similar ones), chosen by the coaches of entrants from the list of previous topics on the morning of the competition.
3. Students would be given the same amount of preparation time they would receive at Worlds (1 hour) and not be allowed to bring anything with them into the prep room aside from blank sheets of paper, an almanac, a dictionary, and a writing utensil (all other things would be publicly passed in to the try-out organizers).
4. Schools can send students equal to the number of delegates that Nova Scotia is allowed to send to the Canadian try-outs. (Up to three students per school can try out this year.) If a school has more students who wish to try out, the school coach can choose the try-out candidates from that school however he or she wants.
5. Students trying out must be eligible to attend the Worlds and must be approved by their coach. Generally speaking, this is not an appropriate tournament for novices to enter: it is serious competition. Among other requirements, students must be in grades 9-11.
6. Students are selected based on performance at the try-outs, regardless of school or geographic area.
7. Each school which enters a student shall supply **one judge** to judge all rounds. (Substitutes are not permitted.) Other qualified judges not associated with a participating school can be recruited. There can be no more than one judge per school. There should be at least 6 judges in total. More would be better. Judges are to assess the debate independently.
8. Only one debate will take place at a time and each debate will be seen by every judge.

9. Assuming 12 students try out (four teams of three), each student debates three times, once in each position on his or her team as assigned. Students are to do their preparation when they are not debating and they may not watch the other debates.

10. Each judge sees every debater three times and has the opportunity to size up each debater once in every position and against each other debater. Students are to be assessed on the criteria used at the Worlds schools tournament, but the judge may use whatever score sheet or system he or she wants. A judge's completed score sheets are not turned in and do not need to be shown to anyone.

11. Because two teams of students are locked up while the other two debate, the same topic is used for each pair of debates – 3 topics in total, for 6 debates. All judges see all twelve debaters debate exactly the same topics (although they listen to each resolution being debated twice).

12. Each judge will keep his or her own score sheets. At the end of the day, each judge will rank all twelve debaters (except the students from his or her own school) based on the judge's scores alone. The judge then submits his or her ranking of the students from 1-11 (assuming one debater from his or her school), for tabulation.

13. Each debater's **best and worst rankings** are dropped – the remaining judges' rankings (not scores) except that from his or her own coach are then added. The three debaters with the lowest numerical rankings go on to the national try-outs. (For example, a student chosen as first by 2 judges, second by two judges and third by 1 judge not from his or her school would have a "9"; his or her low score (the "3") would be dropped, so "6" would be his or her ranking). Each debater will end up with one ranking from each judge not from his or her school, before dropping his or her lowest ranking.

If necessary to make the numbers even, schools could be invited to send an additional debater and any extra contestant(s) would be selected by a draw.

We think this allows for an excellent side-by-side comparison of the debaters. It seems to neutralize any complaint about judging because everyone is seen by exactly the same judges, the same number of times. Each debater debates once in each position.

Two disadvantages: A debater has the same partners throughout (although in different positions), and he or she debates only one side of each resolution each round.

It is impossible for us to have debaters switch partners (unless they debate against some persons more than others). We think this system is preferable to that alternative.

While it might be preferable to have debaters debate both sides of the same resolution, that won't happen at the Vancouver try-outs and it is probably more valuable to see the student handle three different issues. Team scores and which team wins the argument are not relevant to the judging here, anyway.

Attached is a file containing a Schedule of the day, including the order of speakers.