

The Sunset Cliffs Classic Invitational Forensics Tournament (rev 08/29/24)
NPDA Parliamentary Debate: Tournament Rules, Regulations, and Judging Tips

1. Identify the debaters and confirm they are on your ballot, and that you know which student is in which position for the awarding of speaker points later, and the decision-making process for win/loss.
2. There will be a central announcement of the topic, which will begin the 20-minute preparation time for NPDA. Teams not present in their round and ready to speak by the end of the preparation time should be forfeited. Anything beyond a minute or two of grace will throw the tournament off. Five minutes' grace is the maximum allowable for tardy beginning. Forfeits occur after that limit.
3. Speeches should not exceed the following times. There is no preparation time between speeches other than in flex time. Some judges still introduce the speeches by titles and times. (For example: "We thank the Prime Minister and recognize the Leader of the Opposition for a constructive speech not to exceed 8 minutes.") But most judges no longer follow this tradition.

PM (Prime Minister)	Constructive – 7 minutes + 2 minute flex for question/prep
LO (Leader of the Opposition)	Constructive – 8 minutes + 2 minute flex for question/prep
MG (Member of the Government)	Constructive – 8 minutes + 1 minute flex for question/prep
MO (Member of the Opposition)	Constructive – 8 minutes
LO (Leader of the Opposition)	Rebuttal - 4 minutes+ 1 minute flex for question/prep
PM (Prime Minister)	Rebuttal - 5 minutes

{No new arguments in Rebuttals new extensions/examples O.K.}
4. Start speaking time once prep time is over. Do not allow debaters to stretch time out beyond their assigned speaking time as it causes the tournament to run late.
5. Points of Information (POIs) may be used in constructive speeches only, and only after the first minute and before the last minute of the speech. They may not be used in rebuttals. Speaking time is not stopped for these points. POIs are for the non-speaking side to ask brief questions or make brief points. The speaker can decide whether to yield to the POI. If accepted the POI should not exceed 15 seconds.
6. Points of Order may be used by the non-speaking side to point out a rule violation, such as making a new argument in rebuttals or speaking over time. These points are directed to the judge, and time must be stopped while the judge rules on the objection. The judge can ask for a very brief response by the speaker then rule either: Point Well Taken – if the judge agrees with the objection, Point Not Well Taken – if the judge disagrees, or Point Taken Under Consideration – if the judge will decide the point after the debate. Speaking time resumes upon the judge's ruling. Do not allow a lengthy debate on these objections, and discourage numerous, frivolous objections.
7. Please do not provide oral critiques to debaters before ballots have been completed and returned. Revealing decisions is discouraged for tournament management reasons. Orally revealing decisions later at judge's discretion once ballots are completed and returned is all right, assuming neither the debaters nor the judge is delayed from other tournament responsibilities.
8. Debaters may refer to written materials such as briefs, dictionaries, and almanacs in Prep Time, but may not actually read such materials during the round beyond what notes they wrote in prep. NPDA allows the use of devices to flow and take time, but not to ever research points or communicate to others. This is a disqualifying violation of rules. Judges should follow the same rules and understanding.
9. Coaching during prep time is not against the rules. However, neither critics nor debaters may delay their rounds to confer with others. Should such practices delay rounds or negatively impact the tournament, a judge's teams may be penalized, even with losses, at the Tournament Director's discretion, in elimination rounds too.
10. Please clearly write the decision and reasons for the decision on the ballot. Please be constructive. Rank speakers 1-4 (no ties) and rate them up to 30 points each (ties permitted). 0-20 points are discouraged unless debaters are very rude or are not trying. 30 points means the speaker was perfect, which is also fairly rare. Average speaker points often fall in the 24-28 range for Open and may be a little lower for Novices or Juniors.

BASIC DEBATE JUDGING TIPS

1. Do not abuse your power as a critic by creating artificial hoops the debaters must jump through (such as addressing you by a clever title, or repeating certain phrases or words in exchange for speaker points). This may seem clever to a critic at the time but is demeaning and annoying to debaters trying to apply the many other concepts they are struggling to remember and learn.
2. Debate judges are encouraged to base their decisions primarily on the arguments delivered by the debaters, as opposed to interjecting their own viewpoints of what is right or wrong with the topic.
3. Remember, the arguments offered may or may not be the actual views of the debaters involved. They are supposed to be working on improving their argumentation skills and have been assigned a particular side to defend on each resolution. They are expected to choose the most effective arguments to defend their assigned roles, short of making evidence up of course.
4. If you are the judge in charge of a particular debate, make sure you are familiar with the rules, regulations, and judging tips shown on the preceding page. You will need a timer that allows you to gauge seconds and minutes.
5. If you are judging elimination rounds you need not rate or rank the debaters, but you should complete the rest of the ballot. NPDA judges should never confer with others in making their decisions.
6. Your ballot should clearly explain the reason for your decision, what argument(s) convinced you and why. Why did you not accept the other side's response if any? Writing "Oral Critique Given" is not enough. Coaches need the data to help work with their students on needed areas of improvement.
7. Comment constructively on how the various debaters might have done a better job and comment on what you enjoyed or found impressive. Comments should look to both content and delivery.
8. If you are chairing a round with multiple critics, you should probably not make final rulings on Points of Order that might restrict other critics' decisions. Do not discuss the round with the other critics until all ballots have been completed and signed and the decision has been announced.
9. It is against organizational and school policy to engage in practices that could be considered sexually harassing or demeaning in any manner, such as offering pejorative comments on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, preference, etc. Please remain courteous and civil at all times. And please also make sure that debaters or audience members do not abuse such privileges in their advocacy or exuberance to support a point that might be important to them. Stop harassment, hostility or abusive behavior should it ever occur. This is a learning environment, governed by such restraints common to classroom environments. Such practices are of course very rare.
10. Finally, thanks for judging. Your role is a critical one in encouraging the debaters to continue and to grow in this worthwhile activity. Your suggestions are very important, but your attitude is even more important. Please be supportive and encouraging at all times. Remember you may know a great deal more than many of these debaters. Please don't assume they are stupid for not knowing all that you know. They will learn with your encouragement and constructive criticism. But rude or insulting comments may just cause them to become discouraged or disillusioned and quit, or worse. No one wins in that scenario. We hope you enjoy your rounds.
11. Forfeit Rule: The teams must be prepared to debate at the end of their 20-minute preparation period, or the judge may drop one or both teams. Allowing anything beyond a minute or two of grace could throw the entire tournament off. Please help us keep on time. Five minutes tardiness is the maximum any judge may allow.
12. Judges should never accept a ballot that has you judging your own team, or team members, with one exception. If a school's entry is so large that the tournament has split their entry into two names for the same school, that tournament may allow a judge from that same school to judge a round with both competitors from their same school. That is sometimes needed to allow a tournament to function. But it is not acceptable in most forms of debate (except British Parliamentary) for a judge to decide a round with one team from their own school against a team or teams from another school. That might give the appearance of bias or an uneven playing field. Please contact the tournament tabulation staff immediately if this occurs.