

## GENERAL RULES FOR DEBATE

01. A Director appointed by the organization conducting any debating tournament shall prescribe the resolutions, schedules, composition of teams, speaking times, and Procedural Regulations for the tournament and where any dispute arises regarding the interpretation of the rules or regulations, his or her decision on the matter shall be final. All unilingual tournament debates shall be governed by these General Rules, the rules for the specific style of debating involved, and the Procedural Regulations prescribed for the tournament by the Director.
02. The topic of every debate (the "resolution" or "proposition") shall be worded in a positive manner. Resolutions may range from propositions of policy (that is, ones proposing a course of action) to statements of fact, value, prediction, explanation or interpretation. Only resolutions for Parliamentary style debates are required to be propositions of policy.
03. A moderator shall preside over every debate, and wherever possible, shall not also judge or keep time. His or her role is merely to maintain order and enforce the rules: he or she should not take an active part in the debate unless this is necessary to protect the rights of a participant. Decisions of moderators are final and cannot be appealed; debaters shall accept such rulings without question and should always obey the proper orders of a moderator. The Director may appoint a Head Judge to assist the moderator.
04. Every debate shall involve two opposing teams: an affirmative side that supports the resolution and a negative team which contests its validity or proposes an alternative solution to the problem involved. The moderator shall sit between the teams, with the affirmative side seated to his or her right as he or she faces them.
05. In every debate, each team shall have an equal amount of speaking time, and in every debate in which individual debaters are competing for prizes or ranking, each student shall have an equal amount of speaking time.
06. A timekeeper shall be present at each debate: his or her function is to time all speeches, indicate to debaters during their addresses how much speaking time they have remaining, and allow extra time for interruptions. When a debater has exhausted his or her speaking time and a 15-second period of grace (if applicable), the moderator shall require the debater to terminate his or her speech.
07. Debates should be judged by a minimum of three adjudicators, none of whom is known to be biased against any team. Judges should sit apart at several different locations in the debate room and should not confer before scoring the contest.
08. Debates should be judged objectively (that is, on the speeches of the debaters as opposed to the previous knowledge, personal opinions, or prejudices of judges).
09. Except in championship or impromptu rounds, debaters shall argue both sides of a resolution an equal number of times in the same style of debate.
10. Debating shall be continuous unless the schedule includes an intermission before official rebuttals begin. Moderators may pause briefly between speeches to give judges an opportunity to make notes and keep their scoring current; however, in Cross-Examination

debate, there shall be no pause between a constructive speech and the subsequent cross-examination.

11. It is impossible for there to be a tie in debating: the side bearing the onus of persuasion must discharge that burden or lose. Except when the negative introduces a Counter-Plan, the onus of persuasion lies upon the affirmative team. In the case of a Counter-Plan, the burden shifts: the negative assumes the onus of persuasion and so must discharge it or lose.

Except in Cross-Examination style, in any prepared debate on a proposition of policy, the affirmative team must propose a Plan which would produce a significant change from the status quo. A Plan or Counter-Plan must at least be outlined during the first speech of the team proposing it and be completely described before the team's last constructive speech. A Plan or Counter-Plan may be introduced informally (that is, it requires no formal motion of amendment or seconder); it must be shown to be feasible but not necessarily legal or constitutional.

A Counter-Plan may be proposed only if the affirmative has already introduced a Plan. A Counter-Plan must be proven to be an alternative solution to the problem addressed by the resolution, significantly different from the affirmative proposal, a significant change from the status quo, and demonstrably more desirable than the affirmative Plan.

12. Except in a mock trial involving a criminal charge (in which case the accused is innocent until proven guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt"), the standard of proof required to discharge the onus of persuasion is "on the balance of probabilities" (that is, such a case as would convince a reasonable person that the resolution is more likely to be true than false). Except in the case of an absolute resolution, the team bearing the burden of proof must prove only that the resolution is true in the majority of cases or as a general proposition.
13. Debaters should always conduct themselves with dignity and be courteous towards other debaters and officials. Debaters must not disrupt an opponent's speech by any interruptions or distractions (such as loud whispering, shuffling of shoes, rustling of papers, grimacing, affected laughter, etc.).
14. Debaters may introduce any visual aids or other real evidence they desire during a debate, but such evidence is thereafter available for use by their opponents.
15. Debaters may not make personal comments about other debaters; otherwise, they may speak on any topics they like, provided that they do not offend any Canadian laws, including those against obscenity, blasphemy, sedition, defamation and contempt of court. They should, however, confine their remarks to the resolution being debated, any Counter-Plan, and the speeches of other debaters since the judges will reject any comments not relevant to the debate. While judges must consider all contentions advanced by debaters, they may summarily dismiss unsubstantiated assertions or purely emotional appeals. Though all arguments introduced stand until proven wrong, it is up to the judges to decide how much weight they carry. If one team has posed a serious question relevant to the debate and the other side has neither satisfactorily answered the query nor justified its failure to do so, the point in issue may be considered to have been won by the side which asked the question.
16. Except for reasonable role-playing purposes and imagination in impromptu debates, all assertions of fact by debaters must be accurate and debaters must be prepared to cite

specific authority (publication, page, author, date, etc.) for all such assertions immediately upon being challenged to do so. The actual publication need not be produced or screened in advance of the debate by the moderator. Judges will penalize debaters severely for using inaccurate evidence and, if a judge is certain that a debater has deliberately fabricated or falsified evidence, he or she should report this to the Director as quickly as possible. The penalty for fabrication or falsification of evidence is disqualification from eligibility to win any prize or distinction during the tournament.

17. Definition of the terms of the resolution must not produce a truism or a tautology or delete an absolute term. When a negative team challenges affirmative definitions on the basis that they reduce the resolution to a truism or tautology, the negative must propose alternative definitions that it considers reasonable during its first speech. An affirmative team accused of defining a truism or tautology may wait until its final rebuttal speech to show how its definitions are not truistic or tautological. A resolution may be defined by paraphrase or interpreted with formal definitions.

Defining the terms of a resolution is the prerogative and responsibility of the affirmative team: if it fails to do so expressly or by clear implication during its first speech, it must accept any reasonable definitions proposed by the negative team during its first address.

A team which considers the other team's definitions unreasonable must challenge them in its speech immediately following the introduction of those definitions; otherwise it is deemed to accept the other team's interpretation of the resolution. If the first or second speakers for both sides fail to define the terms, the foregoing rules apply to each succeeding pair of speakers. When definitions are disputed for the entire debate, judges will accept the interpretation of the resolution best supported by reasoning and evidence. If there is no other clash between affirmative and negative cases, the debate must be decided solely on the issue of the interpretation of terms.

"Squirrelling" is the tactic employed by a debater to define the terms of the resolution, topic or question in an abstruse fashion inconsistent and disassociated with usual definitions. Squirrelling is not permitted in prepared rounds. Squirrelling is permitted but not required in impromptu rounds on condition that clear links be made between the resolution and the case offered by the affirmative. In an impromptu debate, the affirmative team must provide the negative team with its definitions at least ten minutes before the debate begins.

18. Place-setting and time-setting are not permitted. Place-setting is the setting of a debate of general application in a particular place. Time-setting is the setting of a debate of general application in a particular time, past or future. Unless otherwise specified by the Director, the place shall be deemed to be where the debate is being held and the time shall be deemed to be the present.
19. Debaters have a duty to clash and judges should severely penalize those who present only canned cases. While "rebuttal" is sometimes used to mean only attack on opposing arguments and evidence and "refutation" to refer only to defence of one's own arguments and evidence, in these rules "rebuttal" is used in a wider sense which includes "refutation". Rebuttal is not restricted to the official rebuttal periods: debaters may attack their opponents' arguments or evidence anytime during their speeches. During a final affirmative official rebuttal, however, no new constructive argument or evidence may be introduced.

In the Cambridge format of rebuttal, each debater delivers a constructive address and later an official rebuttal whereas in the Oxford format, only the first affirmative debater delivers an official rebuttal and all other debaters must incorporate their rebuttal into their speeches. While either format may be used in any style of debate, it is traditional in Parliamentary style to employ the Oxford format.

20. Only debaters and officials may speak during a contest. If able, debaters shall stand to deliver all speeches, including asking and answering questions in Cross-Examination debate and raising Points of Information in Worlds style Academic debate. Heckling, however, is done without standing.
21. Debaters must not read their speeches, though they may make reasonable reference to notes or read verbatim quotations. Judges shall penalize debaters for excessive reading or memorization which results in stilted or unnatural delivery.
22. Debaters must not be coached during a debate. Debaters may not communicate with or prompt a colleague who is speaking, nor shall such a speaker consult them for assistance. Debaters shall prepare for impromptu topics without assistance from coaches and shall do their own research for prepared topic debates. No laptop computers are allowed during any debates except in the case of a debater with a physical disability. The only research materials permitted in an impromptu debate are a dictionary, thesaurus and collection of quotations.
23. Debaters should not unnecessarily repeat arguments or evidence. A debater may introduce and review his or her important points with impunity, however, since this repetition can provide emphasis and clarity.
24. Throughout these Rules, the singular shall be construed to include and be read in the plural whenever appropriate.

## **11. Code of Conduct (Excerpt from the Policy and Rules Manual)**

Preamble: Coaches need to familiarize themselves with this code as well as the rules in the **POLICY AND RULES MANUAL** and formally inform their debaters, parents, and supporters about these ethics and rules prior to competition each school year.

### **11.1 PARTICIPANTS:**

#### GENERAL

- a. All participants should be dressed in appropriate attire.
- b. Participants shall be courteous and friendly to other competitors, judges, organizers and guests.
- c. Participants shall use language conducive to proper public speaking decorum. **Profanity is unacceptable.**
- d. In the event of a complaint, all participants must bring the issue to their coaches only, who will then approach the tournament organizer on their behalf. Complaints must be lodged immediately following a round of debate or speech.
- e. Participants shall not argue with the judge or their opponents about the conduct or the result of the speech or debate. Participants shall not dispute the result of a debate or speech round in the presence of the judge(s).
- f. The Association does not approve of the use of any illicit drugs or the consumption of alcohol at Association sponsored events

#### DEBATE

- a. Debaters shall not seek to influence the judge by means other than evidence and argumentation during the debate.
- b. Debaters shall not listen to teams debating that they might meet on the same topic at a later time and thereby gain a competitive advantage. Coaches may, however, observe their own teams.
- c. Use of audio or visual equipment for the purpose of recording a debate may be done with the prior consent of both teams, their parents, and the organizer of the event.
- d. A team shall not seek or provide second-hand information regarding the cases of potential opponents. and not personalities. research done prior to the event.
- e. Debaters shall not breach normal courtesy by interruption, heckling, grimacing or whispering loudly while an opponent is speaking. Heckling, in an appropriate manner, in the case of Parliamentary style debating is acceptable.
- f. Debaters shall not, either by word or action, seek to belittle their opponents. Debates must be a clash of issues and not personalities.
- g. Competing teams must not collude to affect the debate in any way.
- h. Debaters must respect the personal physical space of an opponent. (Do not invade an opponent's space.)
- i. In an Impromptu style debate, debaters must define definitions in the spirit of debate. In other words, they must be defined fairly and allow for debate on both sides of the resolution.
- j. Students may not use electronic media such as computers, palm pads, cell phones, or any communication technology during a round of debate. Debaters must be able to compete on their own merit and the strength of their
- k. A debater shall be discouraged from passing notes/cards to his/her partner when one of them has the floor, either from the constructive speech or the cross-examination. Debaters are judged on individual skills.

Debaters shall not, either by word or action, seek to belittle their opponents. Debates must be a clash of issues **Any conduct not in accordance with these codes will be grounds for disqualification in a tournament, and may include banning participants from present/future ADSA activities. Matters may be referred back to school based administrators.**

### **11.2 COACHES:**

- a. All ADSA clubs must be organized under a teacher advisor.
- b. According to the School Act, as well as School Liability, a Teacher Representative/Coach must be present at all ADSA events that their students participate in. If a Teacher Representative/Coach is not present then the school members cannot participate. If a school is not allowed to participate because of the absence of a teacher coach, that school will forfeit its right to a refund of tournament fees.
- c. In the spirit of cooperation, coaches shall actively encourage the sharing of resource materials available from public libraries and other public resource centers between teams within their own school.
- d. Coaches must demonstrate qualities of courtesy and good sportsmanship. These are evidenced by proper acceptance of officials' judgement, positive encouragement of student performance and polite interaction with tournament organizers in the event of a complaint.
- e. Coaches will support the volunteer efforts of fellow coaches and judges, and will encourage their debaters to do so as well.
- f. The Coach/Teacher, as a representative of the school, is responsible for the conduct of all personnel composing the school's team (participants, and spectators from their school). Coaches will also encourage responsible behavior from the parents. Coaches/Teachers shall make an attempt to control any negative situation, before it becomes an issue for the tournament organizer.
- g. When organizing tournaments, organizers should make an effort to ensure that students from the same school can avoid debating each other when possible and that all debate teams from a school will have a fairly even split of affirmative and negative debates. Coaches should try to assign a bye to the school with the most teams at a tournament.
- h. Coaches will not scout out teams.

**Any conduct not in accordance with these codes shall be grounds for the ADSA to notify the School's Administration. If behavior does not change, the ADSA will hold the right to ban coaches/teachers from attending present/future ADSA activities.**

### **11.3 PARENTS AND SPECTATORS:**

- a. Parents and spectators, both student and adult, will demonstrate courtesy and good sportsmanship by positive encouragement (before and after a debate) for their team/children.
- b. Parents and spectators will demonstrate respect towards opponents, coaches, judges and tournament organizers.
- c. In the event of a complaint, parents and spectators are only permitted to approach their team/child's coach, who will then approach the tournament organizer (in that order). Parents, spectators and coaches will not approach opposing teams, coaches or judges after a debate has been completed, unless to communicate their appreciation to the volunteers for their efforts.
- d. Parents will encourage their child to follow the rules of debate.
- e. Parents will not scout out teams.
- f. Parents and spectators will act in a supportive manner towards all volunteer personnel, who help in the development of all participant's skills, and encourage the promotion and growth of the ADSA.

**Any conduct that is not in accordance with this code, shall be as grounds for ejection from a tournament, and may include suspension of participation in ADSA tournaments or interactions with the ADSA volunteers and participants.**