

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEBATE JUDGES

The marks awarded to individual debaters are extremely important. Individual winners as well as a champion team are being selected and a student from a weak team may still win top individual honours. Moreover, the team championship is to a large degree decided on the basis of members' scores, so *please exercise great care in awarding marks.*

Though all debaters have the same amount of speaking time, they have different functions to discharge. *You should not mark a debater higher or lower because of his or her position on the team or the role he or she must perform.* For example, a Prime Minister has to introduce the Bill, define its terms and outline the Government case; consequently, he or she cannot be expected to introduce as much evidence as his or her colleagues. When you score negative debaters, remember that their role is to rebut, not to build a constructive case (unless they propose a Counter-Plan); therefore they normally are not expected to adduce as much evidence or other content as are affirmative debaters.

Enclosed (if relevant) are the following instructional materials for debate judges:

- (1) a sample *Score Sheet* of the type you will be using. The meaning of each scoring category is explained briefly in the "What to Look For" column, which appears at the bottom of some Score Sheets and as a separate handout with the other. Please study the Score Sheet carefully, noting how all the blanks should be completed.
- (2) a list of some specific *Debate Judging Criteria*. This is not intended to be exhaustive but does provide a number of nitty-gritty items to consider.
- (3) Summaries of both the general and specific *Rules of Debating*. Even experienced adjudicators should examine these: the rules sometimes change! The style(s) of debating that you will be judging should appear in the covering letter.
- (4) a sample *Flow Sheet*, which demonstrates a simple system for comparing and contrasting arguments and evidence. Use of such a system is optional and you won't have to turn in your Flow Sheet or other scrap paper in any event!
- (5) a *Team Evaluation* form. If you are asked to decide which team has won the debate, you may find this particularly useful, especially in a close match. By proceeding to consider the answers one by one, you can quickly determine a winner. For example, a negative answer to any of the first three questions dictates your decision. Remember that *a team whose members have received the higher scores does not necessarily win the debate: rather you should award the decision to the team which has won the argument, keeping in mind the rule on burden of proof.* Don't worry that one side had an easier task in a particular round: all debaters are required to reverse sides from round to round, so any advantage inherent in the resolution should be neutralized by this process.

Please study these materials carefully and be prepared to ask any questions you have about them during the verbal briefing at the tournament.

Finally, some Practical Suggestions:

Please do not sit near or consult with other judges until after you all have scored a debate: we are seeking your independent assessments of the debaters' performances.

Don't let the debate begin unless all members of your judging panel are present.

If you can't hear what is being said, interrupt and say so. Ask the debater to speak up or the others to quiet down. You can't judge a debate that you can't hear!

A moderator may pause for up to one minute between speeches to allow judges to make notes. If you absolutely need such a pause, request it before the debate begins.

If an official errs in a ruling, try to compensate any debater who was victimized.

You should not fraternize with any of the competitors since this might give the appearance of partiality. Please ignore any indication of where a debater may come from.

If you deliver a critique, try to be as constructive and encouraging as possible. You should not publicly castigate a debater: instead make specific suggestions for improvement to him or her in private.

*You should not reveal any debater's scores or winning team during the course of a tournament: debaters will be given their Score Sheets after competition has concluded.*