

Tournament Rules

NextGen Debate

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Official NextGen Debate Tournament Rules

Teams and Speakers

Each debate has two teams - proposition and opposition.

Each team has three speakers.

Each debater on a team delivers one speech. The first two speeches are constructive speeches - new material may be presented in these speeches. The third speaker delivers a rebuttal (summary) speech. No new argumentation may be presented in the rebuttal speech. *See rules for "New Arguments in Rebuttal."

Two Person Team

If for some reason (illness during a tournament, for example) a team is unable to continue with three speakers, the team may proceed with two debaters. In that case, the team member who speaks first also delivers the third speech, the rebuttal speech. A speaker on a two person team is not permitted to deliver both constructive speeches (the first two speeches for a side in a debate). Schools may not regularly register two person teams for competitions. The official number of debaters on a team is three.

At league and invitational tournaments, a two person team may not be eligible for awards. The league president, in consultation with coaches and the tournament director, will determine if two person teams may compete for awards. At NGD events, two person teams are declared eligible for awards permitted that a two person team was allowed to compete given an unusual circumstance. At regional/national championship tournament(s), two person teams may not register for the event and are not eligible for awards except in an extraordinary emergency situation.

Speaker Order

Speakers make their presentations in the following order. The speaking time is the maximum for each speech.

- First Speaker, Proposition Team 5 minutes

- First Speaker, Opposition Team 5 minutes
- Second Speaker, Proposition Team 5 minutes
- Second Speaker, Opposition Team 5 minutes
- Third/Rebuttal Speaker, Opposition Team 5 minutes
- Third Speaker/Rebuttal Speaker, Proposition Team 5 minutes

Preparation Time During a Debate

There is no preparation time during a debate. A judge will thank a student for a speech and immediately recognize the next speaker. At that verbal signal, the opening speaker for the opposition would rise and move to the center of the room or podium to deliver their speech.

Preamble and Grace Period

ALL speaking is included in the debaters speaking time. If a student starts talking, the judge or designated timekeeper MUST start the speaker's time. It does not matter if the speaker is delivering a "roadmap" or another preamble (Are my teammates ready? Opponents ready? Judges ready? My time starts now!") This verbal material must be timed by the judge.

In addition, there is no "grace period" at the conclusion of a speech. A judge must stop taking notes when the time ends at the 5 minute mark. Students do not receive credit for any material entered into the debate after their speaking time has concluded. Of course, a student may elegantly end a speech (and this might take a few extra seconds beyond the official end time). But judges may not record this additional material in a debate deliberation and outcome.

Preparation Time and Debate Pairings

Before each debate, teams are assigned a side (proposition or opposition), an opponent, a judge, and a location for a debate. This information is included in a "pairing sheet" and posted in several locations in a large gathering area, usually a media center, cafeteria, auditorium, or gym. Some debate tournaments display the pairing information on a projector screen.

A pairing lists debate rooms, teams, and judges in rows. Students find their team code (school name and the initials of the last names of the three debaters) and read across to discover other information. Here is a sample pairing sheet:

Round 2			
<u>Room</u>	<u>Proposition Team</u>	<u>Opposition Team</u>	<u>Judge Name</u>
101	Bobby Duke AAP	Desert Ridge AAD	Owen
102	Desert Chr SSH	John Glenn BMR	Schneider
103	Jackson HTS	Indio TLS	Liggans
104	La Quinta BDM	Paige JKS	Milton

Preparation Time

Students have a total of 20 minutes of preparation time from the announcement of the topic to the start of the debate. Students must be in their classrooms and ready to debate at the 20 minute mark. They do not have 20 minutes and additional time to get to a room for their debate. If students are more than 2 minutes late to a debate, they should lose the debate by forfeit. For NGD this decision is left to the head judge who will make this decision after the debate round is over. We are an “education first, competition second” type of league.

Transcribing Notes and Electronic Information

Students must transcribe or re-transcribe all notes and other prepared materials to colored paper (provided by the tournament host) during preparation time. No material written or typed in advance of the preparation time period may be used or reviewed during a competitive debate. If a student has an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the student may use a computer or other device during preparation time. Other students may use electronic equipment during preparation time in the same manner that they would use paper. In other words, a student may not use an electronic device to access the internet, conduct advanced research or searches. A student may only scroll through material and transcribe the electronic notes to colored paper for debates.

Coaching During Preparation Time

Students may speak with other students, coaches, and volunteers designated by their coaches during the preparation time period. No one, a debater or anyone assisting a debater, may access the internet during preparation time. Students may use an electronic device but only as a substitute for paper. An electronic device may not be used to more rapidly search for files, access an argument database, or find material on

the internet. Violations of preparation time rules is a serious rules violation and will likely result in forfeiting a debate.

Points of Information and Argumentative Heckling

A Point of Information, also known as a POI, is an interjection by a speaker's opponent to make a comment or ask a question. It is a request of a member of one team to a speaker holding the floor to yield time. If approved by the speaker, an opponent has up to 15 seconds to deliver the POI. Because the speaker yields time for a POI, the speaker's time continues to run during a POI.

There is no Point of Clarification, Point of Order, Point of Inquiry, Point of Personal Privilege, etc.

Guidelines for Attempting/Making a POI

POIs are directed to members of the opposing team. They may not be directed to teammates.

POIs are permitted during constructive speeches - the first four speeches of the debate. They are not permitted in rebuttal speeches.

POIs are permitted after the first minute and before the last minute of constructive speeches. The opening and closing minute of each constructive speech are protected time for the speaker - no POIs

Students may make a non verbal or verbal request for a Point of Information. A standing student or a standing student with an arm extended is considered to be making a request of the speaker holding the floor for a Point of Information. Nothing needs to be said by the student requesting the point. A student may make a verbal application for a Point of Information by standing and saying "information." The verbal request may only be made once; the speaker may not use any other than that single approved word to request a Point of Information.

A POI may be a statement, an argument directed to the judge, and it may also be a question. But POIs do not need to be in the form of a question.

An argument made as a POI ought to have the same consideration as any argument entered in the debate.

More than one person on a team can request a POI at the same time. A speaker will only recognize one of them if accepting a POI.

Argumentative Heckling

Is an interruption of a speaker by one or more members of the opposing team. Heckling may be presented at any time in the debate. They are 1-2 words (or perhaps 3 brief ones) in length and never 4 or more. In NGD we simply agree to three words or less.

Argumentative heckling is for the benefit of the judge and adds value to the debate in a substantive way (they support or make arguments). Only argumentative heckling of this sort is permitted; disruptive heckling is not permitted in the format.

Some heckling is positive. Applause for speakers at the beginning and conclusion of each speech is an example. Teammates may also applaud a member of their team during the members speech by tapping on a tabletop or desk with their knuckles; this is conventional applause. Teammates may also call out "hear hear" in support of an effective argument.

Some heckling is negative. Opponents may call "shame" this should not be used for simple disagreement; it is a debate and disagreement is expected. It should be reserved for those times when a speaker makes a claim that is at odds with the facts of the debate (e.g., a speaker states "And my opponent never discussed the issue of unemployment" when the other side did so, and with some detail).

Debaters must allow speakers to make a full argument before heckling to insist on more information or critique a speaker. For example, some students heckle by requesting that a speaker add evidence or source material to complete an argument. These heckles include "Evidence" and "for example?" ... Responsible hecklers wait for the speaker to complete an argument and consider if proper evidence is included in a speech before making these heckles. A debater unfamiliar with appropriate heckling might heckle a request for evidence without allowing a speaker the time to

complete an argument and present evidence. This is non-argumentative and not permitted.

No New Arguments in the Rebuttal Speeches

Speakers are not permitted to present new arguments in the rebuttal speeches (the third and final speeches for each side) of the debate.

A new argument, by definition, is one without a foundation in the constructive speeches. Students may continue lines of argument from the constructive speeches to the rebuttal speeches and add more analysis, evidence, and evaluation (these additions must not make an entirely new argument). They simply may not introduce entirely new positions at the latter stages of the debate.

A judge does not penalize students for presenting new arguments. A judge simply disregards new arguments when evaluating the outcome of a debate.

Rules for Judging

All judges must complete Judge certification to be eligible to judge at a tournament. In calibration with Orange County Debate League, NGD has put together a similar yet comprehensive training program for judge certification.

Judges may not change any of the rules for competition (e.g., a judge may not decide that argumentative heckling is unacceptable and tell students not to heckle in a debate). A judge must also take careful notes for a debate.

The judge makes 2 decisions about outcome. A judge decides the side that wins the debate. If the proposition team proves its case is more likely to be true than false, it should win the debate. If the opposition proves the case is more likely to be false than true, the opposition wins the debate. This is determined by the balance of arguments. It may be that one argument alone is sufficient to prove or disprove the entirety of a case or an opponents position in a debate. It may be that a combination of arguments is required to prove that a teams stance in a debate is more likely to be true/false.

In addition, a judge ranks individual student performances based on the grading rubric provided. Rubrics are available online, in judge training documents, and at

competitions. The judge considers public speaker, argumentation, refutation, and other factors in the assigning individual scores.

After careful and private deliberation (judges may not request any help from any other party to make a decision), the judge will complete a ballot, a record of the win/loss issue and individual speaker scores. Judges are also required to write comments and explain the outcome of the debate to help students improve in a space provided on the ballot sheet.

Judges are required to announce the win/loss decision to the students, announce their individual speaker scores, and give constructive feedback to students. In NGD the judge should ask permission from the students before publicly announcing individual speaker points and providing constructive feedback.

Rules for Observers

Observers may not verbally heckle students or disrupt a debate. They may politely applaud for debaters at the beginning and end of each speech but they must do so for all speakers in the debate. In NGD we encourage all students to politely applaud after each speech by knocking on a table with their knuckles. The audience may also occasionally applaud the same way during a debate but no other disruption or heckling is allowed. This is left to the judges discretion and if an audience member is disruptive they will be asked to leave the room.

In the past, audience members have been allowed to verbally heckle during a public debate. A public debate is typically carried out in the final round, on stage, with the top two teams in the Championship Tournament. This is not allowed in NGD however, when competing with other leagues this rule is carefully considered case by case.

Observers may not speak to judges or have any other contact with judges about their debate decisions. If an observer has a comment about a judge, that person may speak to the coach of their school.

FAQ's

- Are teams required to present burdens of proof for the respective sides in a debate?

Some debaters will identify “burdens” for their team (“We have to prove x to win the debate”). Some will identify burdens for the other team (“In order to win the debate, our opponent will have to prove Y”). This is not required.

In addition, the fact that it might be stated by one team in the debate does not make it relevant or meaningful for the other team in the debate. If a proposition team’s opening speaker on a topic regarding abolition of the death penalty states “The opposition team must show that the use of the death penalty is moral in all circumstances,” that does not oblige the opposition to meet that burden. The opposition might argue that the burden is irrelevant to the ultimate evaluation of the death penalty and that the opposition will offer acceptable justifications for keeping the death penalty on entirely other grounds.

- Can the proposition team “limit” or “narrow” the topic of the debate?

Yes, in fact, it is expected that the proposition team must limit the topic. After all, topics may be too broad for a sensible and focused discussion with 5 minute speeches.

When limiting the topic, the proposition team should be mindful that the limitation ought to be a readable one. The proposition cannot place a limit on the topic that is so severe that it is not possible to have a coherent debate. For example, on the topic, “Television is a bad influence” the opening speaker cannot make a case that television is a bad influence on the proposition team alone and no one else. There is no way for the opposition team to disprove that proposition case - there is no basis for a reasonable debate. But it is not reasonable to presume that the proposition side of that debate must argue that all television in all locations for all time is a bad influence, meaning that it has more negative social, economical, and/or educational outcomes than positive ones. That would be a reasonable limitation on the topic and a valid basis for debate.

- Can debaters use personal experiences as supporting evidence in a debate?

This is not a rule written in black and white however, it is typically assumed that no, a middle school debater SHOULD NOT use a personal experience as supporting evidence in a debate. The judge will not penalize but may simply disregard what was said.

This is because personal experiences can (usually) only be argued by presenting another personal experience from the opposing team causing a chain of arguments unrelated to the topic itself. Or in most cases, the personal experience simply can not be argued. For example, if a debater sites a personal experience from when they were mistreated at their local Cracker Barrel restaurant, the opposing team cannot refute since they were not there to witness how the speaker was mistreated.

However, in another example using a topic relating to politics. If the speaker's parent happens to be a politician (or any kind of expert relating to the topic), they may use them as a reputable source. Ultimately the decision on what personal evidence is ignored and what is not, is left to the judge and therefore not recommended.