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## **1. Is there anything I should do before I start judging?**

Before adjudicating a debate you need to remember to leave yourself out of the discussion – this means two basic things: first of all your own opinion on the subject doesn't and shouldn't matter. Secondly, and of no less importance, you shouldn't take your own specific or expert knowledge on the subject into account. Instead, what you should do is adopt a reasonable, unbiased intelligent observer's perspective, and evaluate the persuasiveness of the arguments according to that perspective.

## **2. What am I doing here?**

Go to the debate. Write down the things the debaters say. Try and write things in a detailed manner. Your notes should reflect the most important parts of the debate and should be descriptive (a record of arguments and ideas as presented in the debate) as well as evaluative (how well arguments were made, effectiveness of responses, organization of the speech, manner etc – your personal notes should be distinguished from what speakers have said so it won't confuse you when you are referring to your notes later). Most of the time the discussions won't be about whether or not a title has been announced, but rather about whether or not the point was proven.

Once the speeches have ended, you should rank the teams in the debate. You will then engage in a discussion among your panelists, moderated by the chair of the debate, in order to arrive at the final rankings. During this discussion, you will need to justify your rankings, compare and evaluate teams. This is when detailed notes will be important! Once the panel has decided the rankings, you will then move on deciding speaker points. Remember, teams that ranked higher in the debate must collectively have higher speaker points. You should NOT tell the teams what speaker points they received.

For the first six of the nine preliminary rounds, the chair will announce the results and give feedback – panelists may also participate in the feedback session, but usually after the chair has given the feedback. The last 3 rounds of the tournament (round 7, 8 and 9) are closed – this means no results will be announced and you should not disclose the any part of your discussion to anyone (teams, judges, teammates, friends – anyone!).

## **3. How Should I behave as a Judge?**

Judges should always be professional. ALWAYS. The A-Team can defend conscientious judges to teams who are livid because they just CANNOT believe they took 3<sup>rd</sup> in a debate, but we cannot defend (nor would we want to) a judge who sleeps, answers a phone call, vomits or does other things that destroys your credibility during a round. Take every round seriously.

Professionalism should also extend of post judging. Do not off teams and members of your judging panels to other judges. Do not DO NOT share the results of silent rounds with ANYONE.

## **4. I've heard a lot about something called 'holistic judging'. What is that?**

The short answer: judging any particular thing in the context of all the other things (i.e. as opposed to judging being an exercise in ticking boxes).

The long answer: judging persuasiveness holistically means that strategy, content and style are *interdependent*. Deploying arguments persuasively is impossible if they are not explained clearly, if their

importance is not emphasised, and if the interest of the audience is not maintained to listen to them. Without decent argumentation, style is empty rhetoric, a façade which the intelligent observer would easily see through. As for strategy, brilliantly analysed arguments are unpersuasive if they are irrelevant to the position that is meant to be advocated or if they ignore the central claims made by the other side.

Therefore, judges **should not seek to ‘value’ one of these elements above or below the others**; they should judge the three holistically. A speech cannot be truly persuasive without decent strategy, content and style. We believe that holistic judging is what the intelligent observer of a debate would and should be expected to do. Judges should also not forget that debating is fundamentally about persuasiveness, not the technical fulfilment of various debating guidelines such as ‘have three points’ or ‘headline all your arguments’. A speech can be extremely persuasive without ticking such boxes.

## **5. How do I assess content?**

The content of arguments should help you to assess whether teams have effectively shown their claims to be **true** and **important**. Effective analysis should not be confused with ‘complication’. Both complex and simple arguments can be effective; what matters is whether the claims are adequately substantiated. A team’s arguments should be interpreted charitably, but you should not reconstruct them as having said things which they clearly didn’t, or attach much greater weight to arguments because you think they were ‘trying to express’ a brilliant idea of your own.

There is an unending dispute every year at WUDC about the relative importance of ‘principled’ and ‘practical’ arguments. This is not a productive way to think about content. In proposition, a team needs to show both a) that the place they want to be is worth getting to, **and** b) that their policy gets them there. Opposition teams need to dispute at least one of these things. It may be better to dispute both, but if they can *conclusively* refute one of them, the proposition falls. The relative importance of so-called ‘principles’ and ‘practicalities’ depends on the actual pattern of clash in the debate. Knowledge is good, but only insofar as it creates a persuasive case for one side of the motion.

The last, but by no means least important thing we would like to say about content, is that when we are evaluating content we need to evaluate it "in and of itself", and not the way it was handled in the debate. A good argument is still good even if it was rebutted by another speaker and similarly a poor argument is still poor even if it was not rebutted at all.

## **6. How do I know if an argument is "important?"**

At Worlds and in parliamentary debate generally, arguments are evaluated qualitatively and not quantitatively. So a team with MORE arguments is not automatically better than a team with less arguments. The value of an argument depends on

- a) how relevant it is to the debate. This depends the topic and how the topic is interpreted (the definition, the parameters etc)
- b) how teams engage that argument – arguments that the teams think are important and engage more should factor more prominently in your analysis of the debate
- c) how the argument was constructed – an interesting idea that was stated is not an argument and it’s difficult to give credit to. Similarly an argument that was presented late in the debate is difficult to credit because it cannot be responded to.

## **7. How do I assess Points Of Information?**

Offering and receiving Points of Informations are part of the role of a speaker. They ensure an even level of engagement among teams and are a crucial part of the dynamics of a BP debate. We recommend each speaker take at least one point of information and no more than three. A failure to take a point of information reflects poorly on the speakers ability to engage the opposite bench, time management and role fulfilment. Taking too many Points of Information reduces the ability of the speaker to develop arguments and could indicate an inability to contribute or develop arguments.

Points of information are part of the content of a speaker and should be evaluated as such. They may serve to reinforce and substantiate an argument, or to rebut a point made by the other side. In either case the judges should weigh up how important and effective they were, as with any other form of content.

POIs should be short – two sentences or 15 seconds. Speakers should not verbalise or headline their POIs. They should only say “POI”, “On that Point” etc – and not indicate what their POI is before being accepted by the speaker. So for example saying “On the right to bodily integrity” is unacceptable. If this happens, use the time between speeches to warn the speakers.

If speakers use POIs to harass or barrack the speaker, judges are empowered to call order to the debate. Speakers can offer as many POIs as they want but they should be done discreetly without interrupting the speech and at intervals of at least 15 seconds. Speakers should sit down immediately if instructed by the person holding the floor.

## **8. How do I assess style?**

Style will often be very important — parliamentary debating is a public activity and should remain that way. If speakers do not take the effort to engage judges or audience, debating will become a very dull activity indeed.

There are lots of ways to be stylish; there is no one correct way to do it. For example, teams should not be penalized for not telling jokes; if the style of a speech was Churchillian oratory, a joke might have undermined the style. Equally, if someone is ‘stylish’ in a way irrelevant to their persuasiveness on the issue (for example, by telling many unrelated jokes), this should not be rewarded. Generally we believe that style is everything you do in conveying your content to maximize its persuasiveness.

Speaking with a pronounced and unusual accent is not bad style and you should allow reasonable leeway for English as a second and foreign language teams. Examples of things which are unequivocally bad style include (but are not limited to) speaking too fast to be followed, shrouding your claims in evasive and unclear language, constant hesitation, and sounding bored with your own speech. You will note these sins are not particular to ESL or EFL teams.

## **9. How do I compare teams to assess their persuasiveness?**

Use standards that are **relative**, do not impose unfair burdens on teams. To assess if an argument is properly developed, compare that to what extent arguments were developed on the opposite side. Often teams will be pressed by other teams (or the motion) to prove their arguments to a certain level of absoluteness. Compare this standard with the status quo (what sort of change are they trying to effect) and with how much the opposite team in that debate is trying to do. Asking questions and forcing burdens on the other team are not arguments – it’s not fair if one team is forcing the other team to prove more than what they themselves are willing or able to prove.

Be **comprehensive**. Compare both speakers in a team to both speakers of another team. Evaluate the contribution of a closing team independent of the contribution of the opening team. Do not be swayed just on the strength of one argument.

A good way to start coming up with your rankings is to compare each team in the debate to every other team (so compare OG to OO, CG and CO, then compare OO to OG, CG and CO, and so on). Compare how they fulfilled their roles, the value of their contributions to the debate, their manner and style, how they engaged other arguments in the debate and so on. If one team did all or most of these things better than all the other teams, they should rank highest.

### ***10. How do I allocate marks?***

The four teams must be ranked first, second, third and fourth. The speakers must be accorded speaker marks consistent with those positions (i.e. the team which won must take more speaker points combined than any other team's combined speaker points, the team which came last must take less, etc). The speaker scale is appended to the end of this document. Please dedicate time and thought to the speaker marks – you will be deciding who the best speakers of the tournament are and perhaps more importantly, whether a team might break!

A good way to start allocating marks is to first discuss what the overall standard of the debate was. If the debate was of high quality, then the average marks of the debate should lie within the upper range of the speaker scores. Then start by allocating marks to the 1<sup>st</sup> ranking team in the debate and then move down. Ensure that scores are reflective of relative differences between speakers in a team, speakers between teams and between teams in a debate.

Thus if the Deputy Prime Minister was only slightly poorer than the Prime Minister, then perhaps their speaker scores should differ by only 1 or 2 points. If the Government Whip was just as good as the Deputy Prime Minister, then perhaps they should have the same speaker scores. If you spent a lot of time distinguishing the two opening teams and think they are very close, then difference in total speaker scores between the two teams should be small.

Finally please give speakers the scores they deserve. Do not use speakers scores to reflect your frustration with a debate or a team. Do not be overly conservative with your scoring – a good speech should receive good scores, don't wait for that one amazing speech that makes you cry/laugh/convert before giving scores higher than 85. Try not to score too low or too high at the beginning of the tournament – you may see a speech that is poorer or better than the one you saw and the moment you give a 50 – you can't go any lower than that.

### ***11. Can more than one team take the same position (for example, come fourth)?***

No.

### ***12. What if a team doesn't turn up?***

A swing team will be sent to replace them. Mark them as if they were a real team (otherwise the other three teams in that room would have an unfair advantage: it would be impossible for them to come fourth). Those marks will then drop out of the tab and not be allocated to the team that should have been there.

### **13. What if the teams say something I think is a clear equity violation?**

Do nothing during the round unless someone *in the room* is clearly extremely upset. In that case, you may want to intervene but even then continue with the debate. In the vast majority of cases, however, an immediate response is not needed, and we would prefer if you didn't give one. Mark them as usual afterwards, not taking the alleged equity violation into account. It is sometimes said that if the argument is really offensive it is probably not a good argument. We are not that optimistic. Our priority here is to separate evaluation of the analysis (your job) from evaluation of the offence (not your job). Find the equity officer after the round and describe the alleged violation. It is then their decision as to what sanctions would be appropriate. This is vital if the equity policy is to be consistent, and fair: debaters must be able to reasonably anticipate what would constitute an equity violation. In order for this to happen, equity must be administered by a single source, rather than hostage to the extreme varied standards of taste and decorum across different debating regions, and within them.

### **14. During the discussion, what do I do?**

This depends on if you are a chair or a wing.

*If you are a chair:* your job is to manage a discussion, the end goal of which is a consensus on the way the debate went. Try not to give your view of the result right at the start of the discussion because that may bias what other people say. You want ask your wings as to their opinions, and their reasons for them. If there are any disputes about the rules, or about what was said in the debate, it is usually easiest to resolve these first. You can then concentrate on the meat of the discussion: the evaluation of the teams. Please note: your wings are not dead weight to be bullied, dismissed or duped. If we thought they were that bad judges, we would not put them in the judging pool. Botswana Worlds has an embarrassment of riches when it comes to judges. We anticipate your wings will be intelligent and helpful people.

*If you are a wing:* your job is to assist your chair in coming to a consensus position. This is not a fight, or (God forbid) a debate, but a reasoned discussion. You can be most useful to us if you can be clear about your initial call, and your reasons for that from the start. Nobody will reproach you for changing your mind – the point of gathering initial opinions is to structure a conversation

### **15. Can wings 'roll' (i.e. outvote) the Chair?**

If consensus proves impossible and your runner tells you that you have to call a vote, then yes. Remember that your Chair is a chair for a reason (i.e. we have reasons to believe they are very good at this sort of thing, and – crucially – better than you), but also remember that you are there for a reason too. That is not to say that your chair is infallible, merely that if you are going to outvote your chair, you should probably be sure, really sure, that they have simply got it wrong.

Judges do not “win” or “lose” during the adjudication. Being “rolled” should not be seen as a negative thing, nor should panelists take pride in “rolling” their chairs. Your obligation is to teams, to return the fairest result and one that takes into account the largest possible views. Put aside your ego.



### **16. Will I be “binned” (i.e. send to rooms with teams on lower points) if I roll the chair?**

Firstly, **there are no bins at Botswana Worlds**. *Every* single team here has paid registration, and part of what they are paying for is your time and your respect. Every single team at this tournament merits considered judging and feedback. In fact, less experienced teams (who may well be in rooms with less points) *particularly* merit your time. **Every debate matters** – to us, the tournament and definitely the people in that room so please respect it.

Secondly, **being sent to a room with lower points is not a punishment**. Please do remember that this is a tournament with three breaks (Open, ESL, EFL). That means a huge number of rooms remain live until very late at the tournament. A room with lower points is likely to be on the edge of a break, making it extremely important. Even in rooms where it is not possible for a single team to break, all four of those teams deserve feedback. If we want to punish you, there are plenty of other things we could do.

Thirdly, **no**. We will not seek to punish in any way judges for rolling their chair. We want wings to take rolling very seriously, but we do not want it to never happen (otherwise, we would simply not bother with wings, or not give them the power to roll).

However, if we have good evidence that a judge is not taking their job seriously or acting in an unprofessional manner, we are likely to rank you lower within the judging pool (meaning you need better judges to manage you) or make you a shadow judge.

### **17. What is a shadow judge? Why am I a shadow judge?**

A shadow judge is someone who will judge a debate but not be responsible for deciding the outcome of the debate. You will be assigned to a room and often be allowed to participate in the discussion, but will have a reduced impact on the outcome. If a vote is called, you will not have a vote. Especially if time is short, the chair can focus the discussion among only other assigned judges.

The chair and panelists will rank your participation in the discussion and this will determine if your role will change.

You will become a shadow judge if we do not have enough information about you to determine your ability of a judge or if believe you do not yet have the ability to effectively judge. This is determined based on the adjudication test and feedback from teams and fellow judges.

### **18. Who can break as a judge?**

Everyone. You do not have to chair or panel every round in order to break.

### **19. What should I say in my oral adjudication?**

We want your oral adjudication to include 3 main things:

- A. The ranking of the debate – a quick short presentation of the results at the start of the debate.
- B. The reasons for this ranking being the way it is (so that teams understand why they were assigned the rank they were assigned) – this should be most of your oral adjudication.
- C. Constructive criticism fro the teams, so that they can do better in the next round – remember to distinguish this from the reasons why teams ranked as such in this debate. You do not want teams

## Judges Briefing



to think they did poorly because they didn't do something you wanted them to do. Constructive criticism can also happen after the oral adjudication and be delivered personally to teams.

Your feedback should not exceed 15 minutes.

### **Speaker Scale**

The mark bands below are rough and general descriptions; **speeches needn't have every feature described to fit in a particular band**: our job as judges is to find the best fit. Throughout this scale, 'arguments' refers both to constructive material and responses.

Please use the **full range** of the scale, and do not revel in being a '**harsh**' marker. There is no metaphysical truth about what an '82' consists of, the best practice is to mark in line with these guidelines and the rest of the judging pool or it is unfair on the teams you judge. Speaker marks determine many of the breaking teams, and tab finishes can be big achievements for lots of people, so please give them the moment's thought they require. If we receive repeated reports of suspiciously low (or high) marks it may impact upon your judging ranking.

Please remember that the average score for a speech is 75. The score of both speakers in a team combined is the team score. A higher ranked team must receive a team score that is higher than the team below it, although this does not need to be true for individual speakers in the team – one of the speakers in the team ranked lower can high a higher score than someone in the team ranked higher as long as the total team score is still lower. Scoring is done by consensus after the rankings are determined.

When deciding speaker scores, try to ensure that the difference is total scores between teams is proportional to the difference in quality of the teams. Therefore if you thought it was very close between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, it is appropriate that there is a small difference between their team scores. Also ensure that scores highlight the relative difference between individual speakers. Finally, it's a good idea to first ascertain the quality or standard of the debate (did you think it was an average, above average, exceptional debate?), and then start by scoring both the speakers in the 1<sup>st</sup> place team and then moving down your rankings.

# Judges Briefing



100-95	Plausibly one of the best debating speeches ever given, flawless and astonishingly compelling in every regard. It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.
94-90	Brilliant arguments successfully engage with the main issues in the round. Arguments are very well-explained, always central to the case being advocated, and demand extremely sophisticated responses. The speech is very clear and incredibly compelling. Structure and role fulfillment are executed flawlessly.
89-85	Very good, central arguments engage well with the most important issues on the table and are highly compelling; sophisticated responses would be required to refute them. Delivery is clear and manner very persuasive. Role fulfillment and structure probably flawless.
84-80	Relevant and pertinent arguments address key issues in the round with sufficient explanation. The speech is clear in almost its entirety, and holds one's attention persuasively. Role is well-fulfilled and structure is unlikely to be problematic. Perhaps slight issues with balancing argumentation and refutation and/or engagement in the debate.
79-75	Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, and frequently persuasive. Occasionally, but not often, the speaker may slip into: i) deficits in explanation, ii) simplistic argumentation vulnerable to competent responses or iii) peripheral or irrelevant arguments. The speaker holds one's attention, provides clear structure, and successfully fulfills their basic role on the table.
74-70	Arguments are generally relevant, and some explanation of them given, but there may be obvious gaps in logic, multiple points of peripheral or irrelevant material and simplistic argumentation. The speaker mostly holds the audience's attention and is usually clear, but rarely compelling, and may sometimes be difficult to follow. There is a decent but incomplete attempt to fulfill one's role on the table, and structure may be imperfectly delivered.
69-65	Relevant arguments are frequently made, but with very rudimentary explanation. The speaker is clear enough to be understood the vast majority of the time, but this may be difficult and/or unrewarding. Structure poor; poor attempt to fulfill role.
64-60	The speaker is often relevant, but rarely makes full arguments. Frequently unclear and confusing; really problematic structure/lack thereof; some awareness of role.
59-55	The speech rarely makes relevant claims, only occasionally formulated as arguments. Hard to follow, little/no structure; no evident awareness of role.
54-50	Content is almost never relevant, and is both confusing and confused. No structure or fulfillment of role is, in any meaningful sense, provided.