TABBING WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATE TOURNAMENTS

BASICS OF THE TRPC SOFTWARE

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ZA IN PROTI, ZAVOD ZA KULTURO DIALOGA | PART OF PROJECT SPEAKING AND THINKING A BETTER WORLD
To my debate friends
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Introduction

It has been five years since I started tabbing debate tournaments. When I stared tabbing TRPC or Tab Room on PC was already in use for quite some time at Slovenian debate tournaments. Till now it is safe to say that we have used TRPC for more than hounded tournaments in Slovenia. In this five years I tried a lot of different software solutions and I can say that TRPC is currently best software that I can find. The software was developed by Rich Edwards and is still supported. You can software and the manual here:

https://bearspace.baylor.edu/Richard_Edwards/www/TRPC_Software.html

I have been using TRPC from beginning and I learnt quite a lot about what it can do and how can you use it even if it’s not optimized for your tournament. Main characteristic of the software is possibility to use power-pairing system, which I believe is the fairest system for tournament. Even more it allows you to use different kinds of power pairing. I mostly use so called high-low power pairing that we will discuss latter on. For me it was natural to use power pairing and I was used to from the times when I stared debating in high school. Once I entered international debate circuit I was shocked to see that there is not many high schools tournaments that would use power pairing. Ljutomer International tournament was only one I knew that was power paired. In nine years since my debate career started things have changed. Now more and more tournaments are using power pairing and I am proud to part of this transition. It all started in 2011 when I was consultant at Heart of Europe and we used TRPC as secondary system for power pairing. Tournament went well and next year we already saw more power paired tournaments. I was tab master at Heart of Europe 2012 and ARGO open 2012. Both tournament went well and most important they were on time. Especially Heart of Europe showed how much potential TRPC has and with a little bit of playing with it we were able to pull out a great tournament. In 2014 I can see a lot of power paired international tournaments but a lot of them are manually power paired which can create problems and delays tournaments.

I would like to give you a complete guide how to use TRPC for World Schools tournaments. Currently there is no quick and easy guide (that I am aware of) to help you with TRPC. Of course there is a manual, which contains a lot of useful information, and I recommend reading it. This guide is meant to give not only the theoretical knowledge about the software but whole experience you will get as a tab
master. We will start with the basics of power pairing and then continue with using the software and some tricks that should help you with your tournament. At the end I will tell you a story about how we tabbed Heart of Europe 2012.

In the end I would like to give a huge thanks to Rich Edwards for creating the software that enable us to run fast, efficient and most importantly fair debate tournaments.

In case you have any questions about software or tabbing you can contact me via email: aljosapolsak@gmail.com.

Power pairing

Before we start with start using the software we should have a basic idea what power pairing is and how it works. Knowing that will help us understand what is happening and dealing with possible anomalies.

Basic idea of power pairing is having teams with the same record debating each other. There are many arguments why such a system is the best. Let’s just take a look on the most important ones. Form the educational standpoint it is believed that you will learn most when debating against somebody that is roughly same skill that you. In case a very good team would meet a bad one there would be little to gain for both teams. Good team would have an easy job winning and not learning a lot, bad one on the other hand would see a debating which is not on their level and this would probably cause more harm than god for this team. It is belied that one will make most progress debating someone he or she can debate against. If we go to the tournament it would be unfair that one team would constantly get teams that are much better or worse than them. Both this problems are best solved with using power pairing system.

We can divide power pairing to two categories. First one is the high – low and other is high – high. Both systems work in brackets. In high – low system top team in the bracket would debate bottom team in the same bracket. In case of high – high power pairing top bracket team would debate each other. For me high – low system is best compromise since it assures similar skill teams meeting and at the same time makes sure that very best teams do not bump each other off and it gives you (arguable) the best break possible.
Let’s take a look on examples. Firstly we need some teams and their records (we only have one judge per round in this example):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
<th>WINS</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team G</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team H</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In case that we have no restrictions regarding teams e.g. all teams can debate each other high – low power pairing would look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team A – 3/750</td>
<td>Team D – 3/735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team B – 3/745</td>
<td>Team C – 3/740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team E – 2/730</td>
<td>Team H – 2/715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team F – 2/725</td>
<td>Team G – 2/720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High – high power pairing on the other side would look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team A – 3/750</td>
<td>Team B – 3/745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team C – 3/740</td>
<td>Team D – 3/735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team E – 2/730</td>
<td>Team F – 2/725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team G – 2/720</td>
<td>Team H – 2/715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is of course a perfect example. In reality it is very unlikely that such a perfect situation would happen. For example: team E is quite likely to have more speaker points than team D but note that this would not change power pairing since it works in bracket and number of wins is first criteria by which teams are put in brackets.

Next situation that can happen to you is that teams that should debate against each other would be restricted to debate each other (for example: be from the same school or debated each other before in the tournament (TRPC will not allow them to meet again)). In this case we look for option that would do the least harm to power
pairing. If for example Team A and Team D would not be allowed to debate each other high – low power pairing would look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
<th>TEAM NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team A – 3/750</td>
<td>Team C – 3/740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team B – 3/745</td>
<td>Team D – 3/735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team E – 2/730</td>
<td>Team H – 2/715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team F – 2/725</td>
<td>Team G – 2/720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that we understand the basic idea of power paring we also need to note that in reality there are additional restriction that we need to take into account. TRPC automatically takes all this restrictions into account when paring rounds. The first one is side distribution. In odd rounds teams are on random side and in following even round teams will be on the opposite side than they were in pervious one. This ensures that teams debate equal times on government and opposition. Secondly you can not meet same team twice and you can not meet team from the same school that you are (this will be better explained latter).

**Using TRPC**

**Before the tournament**

You should always have all registration files before the tournament; best would be at least two days in advance. This way you have time to enter all data more comely and there is less opportunity for mistakes. In this chapter we will first look at setting up your tournament and later on entering data.

**Set up your tournament**

Once you installed TRPC and formatted all files for the first time you are ready to set up everything.

Go to Format and then tournament setup options and choose Tournament name. Here you enter name, dates and place of your tournament. Under the specific
In the formats section choose Asian Parliamentary if you want to run a WSDC style tournament. As you can see you can also choose three judges but as already said it does not work properly. Under divisions choose how many you want. Than go next setup.

In the second screen almost all is already set up as it should be. Under combine speakers names just check that is set on off. Go next.

Next set up is crucial for the tournament. Here you set up how rounds should be paired. If you have a tournament with less than five rounds I recommend having only first one as random, if more than first two rounds. Use R for random pairing, L for high – low power pairing, H for high – high and N for no round.
In the next setup you choose what you want to do in case of uneven brackets. I recommend that you left as it is (Pull teams up which have ....).

Now you come to tie the breaking system. Here software does not let you change a lot of thing. Most important it has speakers set on high-low points. If you have a small tournament with for example only three rounds you probably want total points to be first criteria. To do that, click Previous Setup button so many times that you get back to the tournament name section. Than choose normal tournament as format, click Next Setup button so many times that you get to the tie breaking system and now you can set it up as you want. Once you did that, go back to tournament name, choose Asian Parliamentary and go to the tie braking system. Everything should be as you set it up, but again you are not allowed to do much here. This is more or less only tricky part of setting up.

After that you come to breaking to elimination round section. Here you just enter to which round you want to break teams in every division. Next one is more or less irrelevant for you. You can set time blocks, but I recommend leaving it as it is.

Sections from here on are more or less irrelevant. The only important one is judges’ placement, which you should leave at random or maybe choose ranking, but it will require some more work if you want to make this work.

Last part is about side determination for elimination rounds. Here just leave it on tradition method, for other methods just check manual. And now you are set for data entry.
Data entry

For entering data to the system I recommend using Tabular data entry system. This way you can easily enter all data for school at the same time.

The system is more or less self-explanatory. You need to be careful when entering judges. Make sure that you enter number of rounds that one should judge. You enter this in the column next to the judges’ name. If you want to make a judge free in one or more rounds you indicate this in next column. Pressing enter after completing each column should put you in next relevant one.

When you enter teams this way, teams form the same school will be automatically blocked to each other.

There is also an alternative system of entering data to the system. It requires you to enter schools, teams and judges separately. I recommend entering schools first and than teams. Entering schools is easy, you just enter school name and click save.

Entering teams (contestants) can be more complicated. Once you entered a team mane and members you need to make sure that you assign school to team since this way team will be blocked to other teams from the same school. You can mark teams with special needs, check box under Room Priority and TRPC will keep this team in Best Accessible room. TRPC also give you way to block teams with other teams or schools. You enter this under Enter Blocks section, which you find under Entry icon.

If you decide to enter judges separately you do this under Enter Judges section. Make sure you enter judges school so he or she will not judges his or hers own teams (if he or she can judge all teams just leave school section empty). You also need to indicate how may rounds a judge will judge, you do this in the Prelim Rds For School box. Additionally you can enter more blocks to judges under Judges Blocks section. Just find team or school you want to block judge with and click store.

Last thing you need to enter are rooms that you will be used during tournament. Go under Entry and than Enter Rooms. Enter room number and click save. You can also mark accessibility of the room. If you mark room as Best Access room, teams with room priority will be in that room.

Once you did all this you should be ready for the tournament. I recommend checking every thing again just to make sure that all teams and judges are in the
system. The easiest way to do this is to print all data. To print teams you go under Forms and than choose Print Contestants for judges choose Print Judges.

At the tournament

The first thing that you would want to do when you arrive at the tournament should be checking if all registered teams and judges actually arrived. In the best case you can even find out that there are some additional judges. Just enter them in the system. If you find out that teams and/or judges canceled in the last minute just delete them from the system. Go back to Entry and than Enter Contestants or Judges and click delete.

Creating the rounds

Once you are sure all data is in the system as it should be go under Operate and Schedule Options. Choose Schedule Round Automatically.

You should see such a window:

Check that you are scheduling round 1 and click Proceed. TRPC will give you a report on random scheduling. Just click Proceed till the end of process; normally you would not change any settings here. If you are interested in the any specific just click on help button that should give you much more detailed information that you may be interested in.
After the process is completed go under Display Schedule. From here you can change judges and rooms. You can also choose a different Bye team if applicable.

**Changing judges**

When round is created go to Operate and Display Schedule. In order to change a judge in debate click on a judge you want to change. New window will open and you will be able to change him or her. You should see something like this:

![Judge Placement Window](image)

You will most likely see judges in two columns. On left are judges that are not judging but would fit to this debate, on the right side you can see judges that would fit but are already judging. To place a different judge in a chosen debate click on a judge you want to place and click OK. Note that in case you choose someone who is already judging you also need to place a judge in that debate. TRPC will automatically open a judge placement window for this debate after you click OK in previous one.

**Changing rooms**

If you want to change a room TRPC does not give you an option to directly change rooms. You will need to create a dummy room and work with that. Make that room as the worse accessible one so that TRPC is less likely to use this room in the first place. Process from here on is pretty straightforward. Let's say you want to change rooms 1 and 2. Click on room 1 and change it with a dummy and click OK, now click on room 2 and change it with 1 and OK. Final step is to click on dummy and change it with 2. Same process goes for all changes.
Reversing sides in debate

TRPC has a tendency to put teams from same school on the same side in odd rounds. Reason for that is that it will have less clashes in the next round in which sides need to be reversed. Still there is an option to reverse sides. Just click on one of the teams in debate and than click reverse sides. If you cannot see the change click Main Menu button and than Display Schedule again.

Assigning Bye teams

It can happen sometimes that your tournament will have an odd number of teams. In that case one of teams will be “bye” which means that they will receive a win and average speakers points. In the first round that team is assigned randomly in power-paired rounds TRPC will use the lowest e.i. team with least wins and speakers points as a bye one. Team can be assigned as bye only once so it can happen that the software will take the next lowest team.

If for some reason you want to have a different team to assigned as bye what you need to do is to click on team that is currently assigned as bye and than click Select a Different Bye Team. You will be able to choose only teams that are scheduled to debate on the government side. If you want a team that is currently on opposition just reverse sides in a debate that team is currently in and that make it as bye.

Entering results

When the round is over you should gather ballots as soon as possible. To start entering ballots go under Operate and than Enter Ballots. You should see this screen:
To start entering points click on the judge that judged this round and screen will change in the way that you can see names of teams and speakers.

Once you enter all point you need to tell TRPC who won the debate. Press A for government or N for opposition. After that TRPC will show sum of speakers points so you can double check results. Than press enter and choose a next judge.

After you entered all the results you are ready to schedule the next round and to whole process again.
Double checking

During the next round you have time to double check results. TRPC gives you two options to do that. Firstly you can go under Cards and than choose Change Contestants Cards:

Just search for the team you want to check and compare results with original ballots. If you find any mistake you can correct it right from that screen. Make sure that you save changes at the end.

Other way is to use the Enter Results screen again. In the top right corner you choose which round you want to check and than a enter team name in search box. You will get a screen with entered points again so you can check it. Again if you find any mistake you can correct it from here. At the end tell TRPC again who won the debate and press enter to save changes.

Elimination rounds

Once preliminary rounds are over TRPC gives you an option to also tab elimination rounds. If you prefer to do this manually follow only steps which explain how to print results.
Printing results

The first necessary step is to print contestants’ ranks after all preliminary rounds. Go to Results than Main Results Printouts and click Print Teams/ Contestants in Order. You should get the following window:

Make sure that under the SET elim bracket you set it up to YES. You also need to write proceed into the box under YES. Than click Proceed Printing of Contestants in Order. At this point you should be thrown back to the main window and a printer should start printing results.

Setting elimination judges

Firstly you need to select pool of judges for elimination rounds. Go to Elim and than Select Pool of Judges for an Elim Time Block. Judges that are selected to judge appear in the blue writing and judges that are not selected in red. In order to change that just click on a judge and he/she will be un/selected.

Once you selected pool of judges you need to schedule them. Go to Elim and than Schedule Elim Judges. Next you need to select for which elimination round you want to place judges. After that you should see this screen:
Use the Back and Forward buttons to choose a judge. When you find a judge you wanted select to which room you want to assign him or her. To do that click on a room number right from a judge name. If the room number is blue than a judge has not judge this two teams before, if it is green than the selected judge heart team before in competition. You also have an option to auto schedule judges. Select how many judges per room you want and than click Auto Schedule button (blue square on picture).

When you scheduled all judges TRPC gives you option to print schedule. In order to do that stay on the judges placement screen and click on Print Schedule.

Once you print schedule you will see Flip of Gov written next to one team in elim round. This indicates on which side teams should be. In teams have already met during the tournament TRPC will place them on opposite sides than they were on first time. In other case it will suggest coin flip for sides. Of course it is totally up to you if you go with this. I believe that method of switching side is only applicable if teams met on the same motion that they are suppose to debate in elim round.

**Entering Elim results**

To enter results from elimination rounds go to Elim and than choose Enter Elim Results. You should see a following screen:
Make sure that you have a right team on side government and opposition. If it is different click Reverse Sides button between the team names. To start entering results click on a button left from judge to tell software that government won (button will turn green) or one on left side if opposition won (in this case button will turn red).

Once you entered all results TRPC will automatically schedule the next round and you will be able to start the whole process of assigning judges for next round again.

**After the tournament**

Congratulation you have successfully tabbed a debate tournament. How ever your job is probably not finished yet. As person with all data from the tournament it is time to distribute all the results, debate records, ...

To print a speakers tab go to Results and than Print Speakers in Order. You will see that TRPC gives you two options: to print speakers or to show them on the screen. I would normally use the show on screen in case I am also the one who is printing awards for speakers. Otherwise just press Print Speakeres in Order and you are done.
Printing a team tab is more or less the same. You already printed one copy when preparing elimination rounds. Simply repeat the process without resetting elim brackets.

TRPC also gives you an option to print elimination brackets and results. Go to Elim and than Elim Printouts and now choose if you want to print brackets or results. From here on process is the same as in previous cases.

Last thing you want to do is printing debate results. Go to Results and than Print Packet Results.

Under Results you can also see Print Judge or Side Distribution Report. The judges’ report will show you how consistent were judges with points to teams, what was their average points and similar information. Side distribution will tell you how many times governments won debates. It will give you information for each round separately and for the whole tournament.

At this point you done more or less everything there is to do as the tab master of WSDC style debate tournament. From here on we will take a look on how to tab Karl Popper style and how we dealt with situation when a tournament had five speakers teams and there were three judges per debate (example of Heart of Europe 2012 and 2013)

Karl Popper style

TRPC also gives you an option for tabbing Karl Popper style tournaments (KP). In fact in is much more optimized for KP than WSDC. In the KP mode it has no problem with three judges, judges ranking and similar set backs that we found when trying to tab WSDC. Here we will briefly discuss the main differences you need to be aware of when you decide to run Karl Popper style tournament.

Set up

Basic set up is similar to a WSDC tournament. When you come to the window where you enter tournament name and place, make sure that you choose Karl Popper (Europe) as a format. From here on the set up is basically same as for WSDC. Make
sure that you checked three speakers on second screen and optionally decided to record ranks. You will see that when it comes to the tie – breaking system you will have no problem adjusting it. Everything else is the same as explained previously.

Entering teams, judges and rooms is the same as mentioned before.

Running the tournament

Scheduling rounds works in the same way as in WSDC tournament. You will see the difference when it comes Display Schedule window. Here TRPC will highlight all mismatches – blue for one win difference and red for two wins difference. Note that that is just for better orientation when you are manually placing judges and it will not stop you from proceeding to print or enter results.

The next difference you will see is next to judges. After judges names you will see judges rankings (if you decided to use the, ABC). This will help you place judges better. If you want to automatically place judges you need to tell this to TRPC in set up process (look set up in the previous section). Note that the way a TRPC places judge is that it will place to ranked judges is most critical rooms. It can happen at many tournaments that you want to have a similar judges panels in all rooms, if you want to know how to do that check How we tabbed Heart of Europe 2012 and 2013 section.

When entering results for a difference from WSDC in KP you will not get sum of points so you will need to check that manually.

Karl Popper style has a problem with judges printing. When printing it will randomly position judges inside panel (i.e. judge you want as a cheer can be listed as third one). In order to avoid that you need to change the tournament style before printing. When you are ready to print a draw just change format from Karl Popper to Asian Parliamentary, print and than change it to Karl Popper again.

After the tournament

All printouts are the same as in WSDC. There is one additional option – printing team cards. This option is also available in WSDC but does not work well. Here it can serve as a nicer way to print tab for participants as Packets Results.
How we tabbed Heart of Europe and Prague Debate Spring

Heart of Europe debate tournament and Prague Debate Spring are examples of international debate tournament where you have teams of five and three judges per round. In that sense it is exactly the tournament TRPC is not optimized for. But with a few tricks you can run it with TRPC and produce a perfectly power-paired tournament that is on time. I have served as tabulation officer at Heart of Europe since 2011 but since 2012 I was in charge of all tabulation and we found what we think is best to run such a tournament. We used the same method also for Prague Debate Spring. Of course if you find the way that better suits you use it and share it with the other tournaments. Here is just our idea for tabbing such a tournament.

What we do is basically use the option to change debate style with no data loss during the tournament and we also combine it with Excel sheet for speakers tab, as you will see. For me this is one of the best parts of TRPC, you can change the style of tournament and even lie to TRPC which round you want to schedule (look to Useful tricks if you want to know more about that)

Set up

Since TRPC does not support five speakers we set up tournament, as there would be one speaker per team. We use Karl Popper format as basics, since it gives us most options for judges placement, and it has not problem with handling three judges. We would change style to Asian Parliamentary only before printing since we want to indicate who is the char of debate.

We only enter team names and just NN for that one speaker per team.

Running the tournament

Since we run it as a one-speaker team you also need to note how you will enter the team points. Since TRPC only allows you to enter maximum of 100 points we enter only last two digits of team points (i.e. 56 if team has 256 points). This is perfectly acceptable since points are always between 210 and 280.
From here on the tournament is more or less the same as any other tournament. Since we are using TRPC only for team tab and you need to enter speakers points separately in to speakers tab.

Speakers tab

For speakers tab we keep a separate Excel sheet. We use basic function like summation and average to make it useful. Here is an example of sheet from Prague Debate Spring:

![Excel sheet example](image)

We also use it for double-checking since the way we enter scores into TRPC does not simultaneously check math. After each round we sort teams in excel and than compare this to TRPC. This gives us simple way to find possible mistakes. Note that for this kind of operation it is good to have at least two persons in tab room, one for main tab on TRPC and the other one for excel.