

## **THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO JUDGE!**

Thank you for taking the time to judge this debate tournament. Were not for you, the judges, these contests would not be possible. We appreciate your sacrifice of time and energy. We offer the following information to help the day go as smoothly as possible.

There are four types of debate at this tournament: Lincoln Douglas debate, Public Forum debate, Parliamentary debate, and Policy debate. In all types of debate, there is a resolution and two sides—those who are for the resolution and those who are against. They are called different things in the different formats (LD-Affirmative/Negative; PF-Pro/Con; Parli-Gov/Opp; Policy-Affirmative/Negative). The debaters are randomly assigned a side to debate; they have no control over what side of the resolution to uphold in a particular round. It is important to evaluate the debate based on the arguments made by the debaters. You should not base your decisions on your personal feelings, opinions, or knowledge of the topics.

### **General Information**

Check in to the JUDGES ROOM when the day starts. Attend the mandatory judge orientation session. Please communicate with the JUDGES ROOM if you are leaving for the day. But, unless special arrangements have been made, schools depend on you staying the entire day so their students do not get forfeited or the teams get fined for missing judges.

This tournament consists of several rounds of debate. Judges will be randomly assigned to debate rounds. NEVER SWITCH JUDGING ASSIGNMENTS WITH ANOTHER JUDGE.

You will be given a ballot with debate codes and a room number. Go to the room that is listed on your ballot. Please make every effort to arrive at your assigned rounds on time.

*I've been waiting 25 minutes and still have not been called to judge. What's going on?* We do the best we can to avoid long waits for judges, but large events and a procedure which requires a particular distribution of judges can take time. Also, sometimes it may seem like every round is covered and we don't need you to judge. But suddenly we do—because unforeseen events happen and we need to replace judges or other judges are missing.

*Why did I get two ballots?* To save space and time, some debates are often “double-flighted,” that is, two debates are assigned to a single room. Thus, you may be judging two L-D debates during one round which will take about an hour and a half. While the first two opponents are debating, the second two must wait outside the room. Before the second debate begins, the first debaters must leave. Thus, only one set of L-D competitors may be in the room at one time.

### **Beginning the Round**

Make sure everyone is there and they match your ballot.

*What if one of the debaters hasn't shown up?* Wait at least fifteen minutes. If, after fifteen minutes, one of the debaters is still missing, go to the JUDGES ROOM to notify them of the situation. Someone will let you know what to do.

Let the students know when you are ready to begin the debate.

## **During the Round**

Instruct the affirmative speaker(s) to begin the round. Follow the time breakdowns given to you on the ballot. If it's not clear or you cannot find the times, just ask the students. During the debate round, try to take careful notes of the different arguments made by the students.

## **Deciding the Round & Filling Out the Ballot**

You should review your notes and choose a winner. Only one side can win. Base the decision on the arguments that have been presented during the debate, and the overall persuasiveness of the debaters.

When you have made your decision, fill out the ballot that was given to you. There are three parts to the ballot – a place for speaker points, a place for comments and a place for your “reason for decision.”

First, follow the guidelines on the ballot and assign speaker points to each student.

Second, give comments to each student. Your opinions of the debaters' work is very important. You are the teacher at the moment. Using the ballot as a guide, you should let the students know what their strengths and weaknesses are and why. Written suggestions for improvement are very helpful. A blank ballot is a great disappointment for the participant. Try to provide constructive criticism in a positive and meaningful manner.

Third, you should indicate why you decided to judge the debate in favor of the affirmative or the negative side. This is known as your “reason for decision.” Please be thorough in your comments. If possible, walk through your decision issue by issue to explain which competitor convinced you and how.

**Don't disclose your decision to the debaters.** Remember to submit your decision promptly. You can always go back and fill in more comments.

## **Conclusion**

Judging is an important responsibility. What you say and what you do, how you act and react affects the students who have entered this tournament and gives direction to their attitudes and philosophies by which they will be living in the future. Be sure to make a positive contribution.

Don't be overwhelmed. There is a lot of information being thrown out at you all at once. Just take a deep breath and relax. If you have never judged before, don't worry. We want students to learn to communicate with all kinds of audiences. Remember, you are the judge; you will simply choose who you thought made the best arguments, and who did the best overall job. If you have any questions, please ask the individuals running the JUDGES ROOM.