

MYDT DEBATE  
JUDGES TRAINING  
PACKET

# What's In Here?

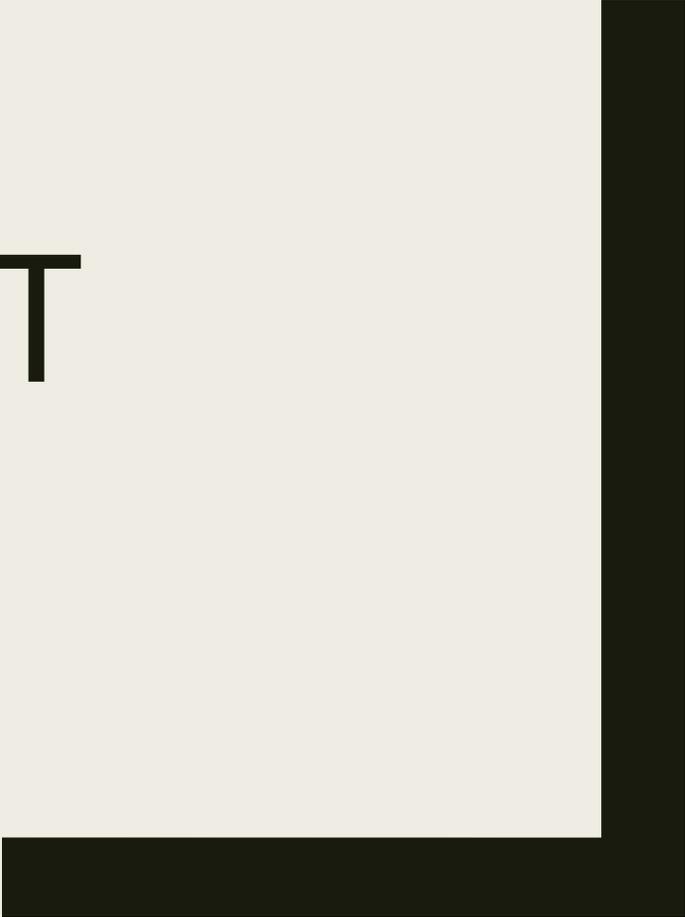
- This document serves to be the baseline rule set and defined criteria for the MYDT debate tournament as whole and the individual debate rounds themselves.
- You will find how individual debater's scores are broken down, and how the winning team is determined (*they can be different from the score!*)
- This is called the 'judges packet' but coaches and competitors are encouraged to reference this material as well.
- If anything is not in this document or is unclear please reach out to MYDT or myself directly and we will update with any clarifications.

[debate@mafiq.org](mailto:debate@mafiq.org)

[farazahsan95@gmail.com](mailto:farazahsan95@gmail.com)



TOURNAMENT  
STRUCTURE

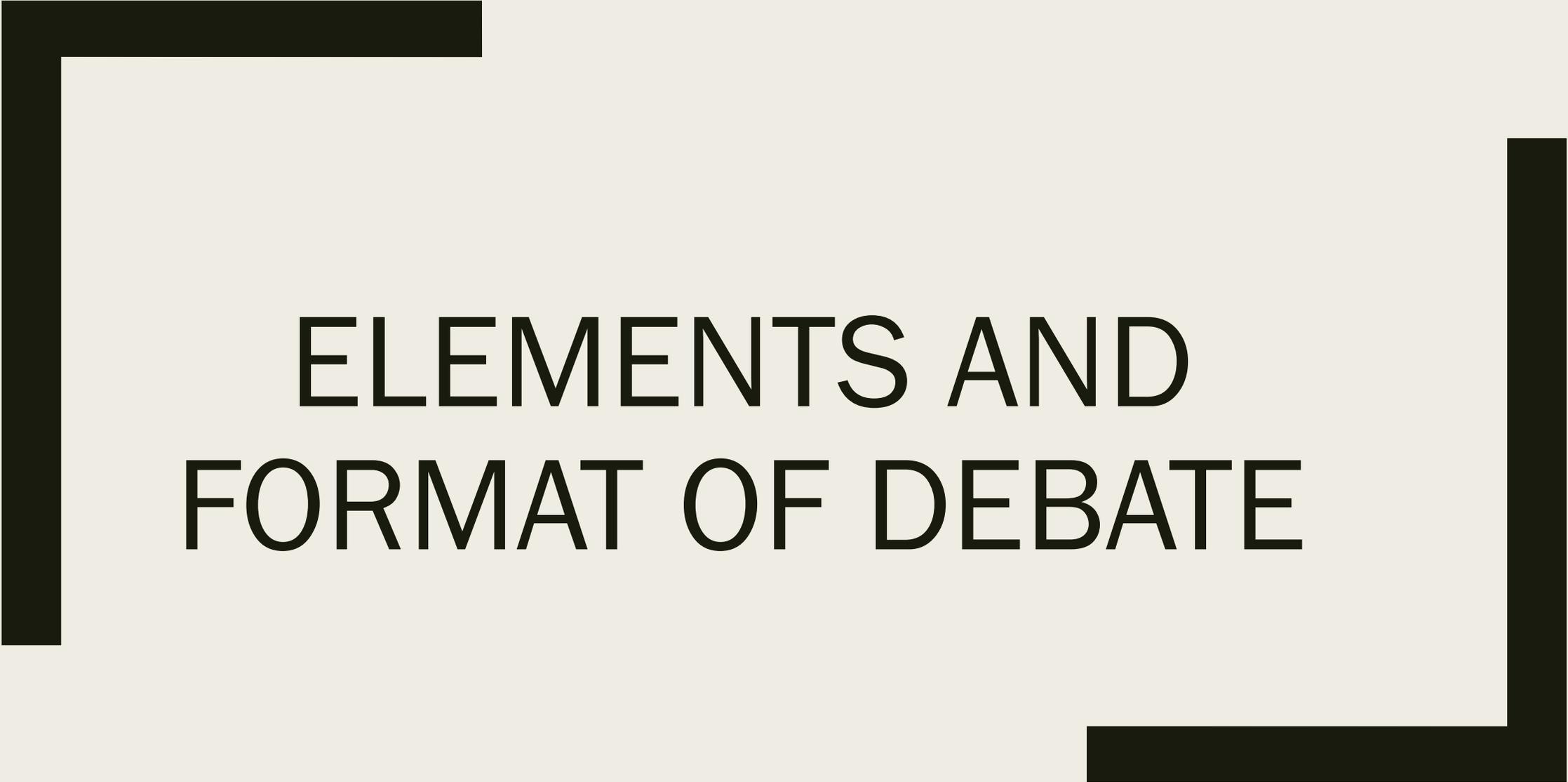


# Tournament Structure

- Scoring and advancement is done the same way as every national debate and mock trial competition.
- Each debate has two elements – numerical scoring of each speaker on their debate performance based on the rubric & the actual winning team of the debate based on the arguments and refutations made.
  - *These two elements are semi-independent of each other. The higher scoring team can still lose the round, and vice versa.*
- In the preliminary rounds the numerical scoring is the sole determinant of who advances in the knockout stage. The teams with the highest average score across the preliminary rounds will move on.
- In the knockout rounds it is the actual winning team of the debate based on the arguments and refutations made that advances to the next round. Numerical scoring is only used to determine the best speaker of the round.
- This is done to ensure the teams that perform the best advance. Each speaker is judged on 4 separate criteria. For a team over 3 preliminary rounds this amounts to 36 data points to compare each team against. That number gets even higher if there is more than one judge per round.

# Brief FYI

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Speakers Get 5 Minutes to Speak, 3<sup>rd</sup> Speakers Get 3 Minutes to Speak
- A time warning will be given with one minute remaining.
- Each debater (except the 1<sup>st</sup> Prop) will receive up to 2 minutes of prep time before their speech. Taking this time is optional.
- After each preliminary round, judges will provide feedback, the best speaker and the winner of the round with an explanation as to why the winning team won.
- After each knockout round, judges will provide only feedback, no best speaker announcement and no winner announcement. The winners will all be made at once when all simultaneous rounds have concluded.
- We are currently aiming to provide scores after each round – pending review of new tabulation mechanisms (date of writing is 3/8/2021)



# ELEMENTS AND FORMAT OF DEBATE

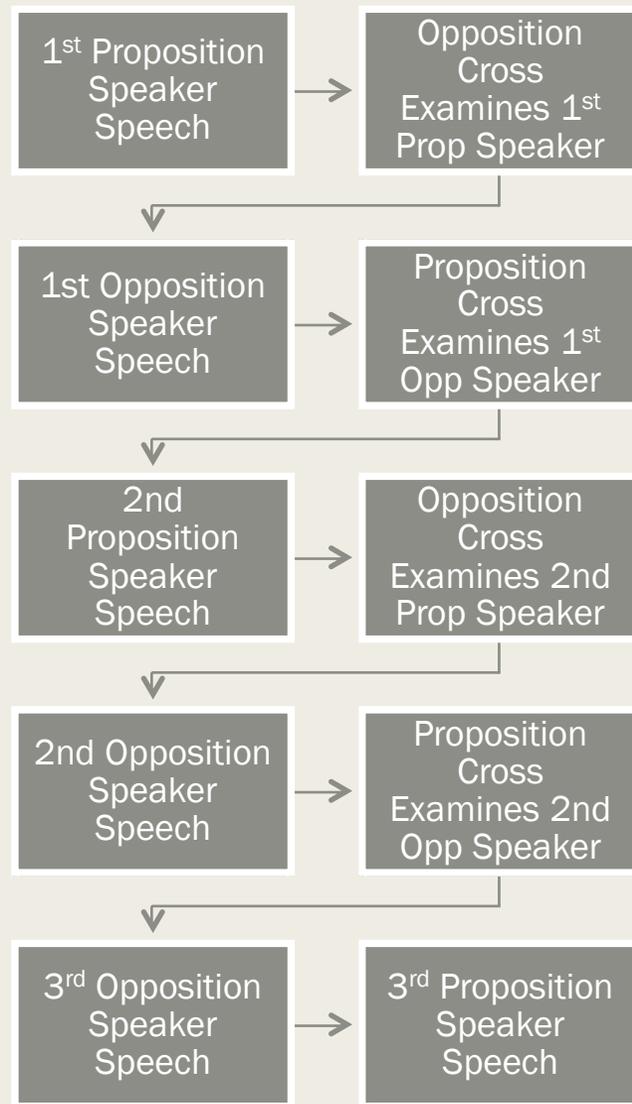
# What is the role of the judge?

- Accurately score each speaker
- Keep accurate time
- Decide which team has won
- Decide the best speaker (highest score – if this doesn't correlate then something's wrong)
- State the reasons for the decision
- Provide constructive criticism and areas of improvement
- Keep notes during the rounds to be able to track arguments and refutations (to determine winner)

# Goal of Debate: This is what I told the competitors

- The goal of debate is to prove your side of topic is correct
- WRONG!
- Every debate topic contains two sides, and there are 'correct' and valid positions on both the proposition and opposition side.
- Your goal as a team is to:
  - *Convince the judge that: the pros of your position outweigh the pros of the opposing team*
  - *Convince the judge that: the cons of your position are less significant than the cons of the opposing team's position*
  - *Convince the judge that: the cons of your position are not as bad as the opposing team is making them out to be*
  - *Convince the judge that: the pros of the opposing team's position are not as good as they are claiming*

# Debate Format: No more POIs – now we cross-examine



# 1<sup>st</sup> Speaker Role – 5 Minutes

- Sets the Definition
  - *Clearly define the topic*
- Provides Team Stance
  - *The direction/strategy of the team's case*
- Tell the judge on what value/basis they should determine who wins
- Presents Split “Road Map”
  - *State arguments of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> speaker*
- Develop Argument
  - *Analyze and elaborate*

# Defining the Topic:

- Each Definition MUST:
  - *Have a Direct Link to the topic*
  - *Narrow the scope of the debate where applicable*
  - *Outline the basis on which the judges should determine the winner of the debate*
  - *Is fair and debatable*
- Unfair Definitions: (Which Opposition can Challenge)
  - *Truisms- a truism is an argument that is considered to be true by the vast majority of people. Example: 'genocide is bad' or 'the north won the civil war'*
  - *Tautology- Not a truism now but will be true in the near future: example: 'Obama should close Guantanamo Bay' (in fact, isn't close yet, but Obama has already decided to close Guantanamo Bay already)*
  - *Squirrels- Wholly unreasonable (we should all eat babies)*
  - *Time/Place Sets- Put the debate specifically In a time. Example: 'We would debate this motion in the context of WW1 1914'*
- “Definition and Stance” Rubric Category: Only the 1<sup>st</sup> proposition speaker is judged on this element.

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Speaker Role – 5 Minutes

- Rebut the previous speaker's arguments and defend your own case
- Presents own arguments (different from 1<sup>st</sup> speaker)
- Develop your Argument
  - *Analyze and elaborate*
- Maintain structure and cohesion with 1<sup>st</sup> speaker

# Role of Cross Examination: POI Replacement

- 1 – 3 Questions: Optional for team that was NOT currently speaking
- Speaker must answer all questions, can respond with “I choose not to answer”
- Novice debaters often do ‘case clarifications’
  - Nothing wrong with it – won’t improve score
  - If they allow the speaker to simply rehash their points or strengthen their own position for most of the time then they LOSE points on refutation
- Intermediate debaters will ask more deliberate refutation questions that are obvious.
  - This is good and should be a factor in their refutation score
- Seasoned debaters set traps and find opportunities to use their opponents words against them
  - This is what cross examination is all about. These “gotcha” moments should be referenced in future speeches for full effectiveness

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Speaker Role – 3 Minutes

- Summarizes the debate, define the CLASHES and MAIN ISSUE of the debate
- Summarizes the entire debate, looking at the arguments, role fulfillment, main questions which need to be answered to win, referencing the criteria made by 1<sup>st</sup> speaker. The team's last opportunity to persuade their main points to be the adjudicator and focus on the key issues of the debate
- Cannot Bring New Matter/New Argument
  - *Dock points in logic and relevance for bringing up new points*
  - *If something hasn't been said previously that the other team would likely refute, it's a new matter*

# How does a judge approach the debate?

- A judge is an average reasonable person
  - *First year university student*
  - *Has no specific knowledge on issues*
  - *A fairly logical person, and listens to reason*
  - *Does not have a personal attachment to the topic*
  - *Is politically correct (penalizes hate speech or any personal attacks by debaters)*
- Adjudicators listen to material presented in the debate, and the debate alone
- Ignores personal opinion towards and issue, and judges the debate objectively

# How does a judge score the debate?

Simple 1-5 scale (different from 1-7 on rubric previously)

1: Poor

2: Below average

3: Just about average – the expected standard for an MYDT high school or middle school debater

4: Above average

5: Excellent

The rubric clarifies what an above average/excellent debater looks like

- *Do not score a debater well if they are obviously reading off the screen/prepared a speech in advance.*
  - *This was observed many times in last year's MYDT tournament.*
  - *Blindly reading articles/other people's conclusions drawn is not logic, reasoning nor does it demonstrate good delivery. These speeches are often not structured well either and tend to just vomit statistics at the judges.*

# Rubric/Scoring Categories

**Structure:** The speaker's speech is organized in a clear, logical way and easy to follow. The speaker effectively synthesizes their speech effortlessly with previous speeches and effectively integrates opponents' arguments into their speech.

**Logic & Relevance:** Demonstrates a thorough grounding in the topic and fully understands the complexities and nuances involved. Delivers arguments back with solid reasoning and thorough evidence. Always answers the question "how does this relate back to the topic?"

**Refutation and Clash:** Effectively clashes with opponent and responds to all opposing points. Questions the underlying assumptions, strategies and relevance to topic. Demonstrates ability to improvise and quickly responds to opposing points. Effectively uses cross-examination questions to weaken opponent's position. Responds to cross-examination questions effectively without compromising team's position.

**Delivery:** Clear mastery of rhetorical devices like humor, pausing for emphasis, and vocal inflection to add depth and character to speech. Speaks passionately and convincingly.

**Definition and Stance:** The 1<sup>st</sup> proposition speaker clearly sets the stage for the debate. Defines the topic, narrowing the scope of the debate where applicable, outlines the basis on which the judges should determine the winner of the debate, provides the team's overall stance and strategic approach to topic, clearly states what arguments will be made by 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Speakers

# Who Wins?

- *No single element* to determine the winner i.e. “opposition made a single refutation that was never addressed, therefore they must win”
- **It is NOT necessarily the team that scores higher points**
- You should decide the debate based on the criteria offered by the debaters in the round
- Come to a consensus with fellow judges if more than one

Did the proposition make a case? In this you will have to look at their line of reasoning, the AREs, and the arguments brought forth.

Did the opposition show that the case was either flawed, inadequate or a dangerous opinion in any way? Were there refutations complete?

Were the rejoinders that the proposition brought up adequate in reinstating their stance and did they address all rebuttals brought up?

If the proposition had a sound case and they addressed all rebuttals adequately, they win

If the opposition had brought *arguments* that the proposition could not *satisfy*, then the opposition wins

# Who Wins?

- *If more analysis is needed in a very close round you can reference the following to weigh the arguments made to determine a winner*

Lets say each side proved one argument conclusively. Then you can look at the significance of the argument overall in the outcome of the debate.



You may also look at what has a greater impact. (One side is talking about saving millions of dollars, the other side is talking about saving lives by avoiding war)



You also look at the probability of the arguments (In the above example, the probability of avoiding war is minimal but saving money is more likely so although avoiding war is better, it may never happen whereas saving money is very probable)



You could also look at any arguments that were dropped. Normally you wouldn't do that if the other side did not pick it up, but in case of a tie, you would.

The image features two large, thick black L-shaped brackets. One is positioned in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner. They are oriented towards each other, framing the central text.

# JUDGING PROCEDURE

# Before the Debate Starts

1. Confirm the correct teams are in your room
2. Assign proposition and opposition by doing a coin toss. I find it's easiest to do using Siri or Android Assistant since it verbally announces the toss but use any means you see fit.
  1. Pick one of the two teams, and announce "If the coin lands on heads, this team is proposition"
  2. Flip the coin then assign the teams accordingly.
3. Fill out all the necessary stuff in the ballot sheet before the debate begins. Ensure all of the following are properly assigned:
  - a. Team Names Correctly Assigned to Prop/Opp
  - b. Each Speaker is correctly assigned to their role
  - c. The correct round number
4. Greet the room, announce the round # and topic.
5. Review the time warnings before the debate starts. You can be flexible here if debaters ask for something different but ensure it is done before the round starts.
  - a. We found the using the Zoom clap feature with 1 minute remaining seems to work well.
  - b. Once the debater's time is up you can give them 10 seconds or so of grace time to wrap up. If they appear to be rambling then you can cut them off by saying time.

# Starting a Round

1. Call up the 1<sup>st</sup> Speaker “I now call on the 1<sup>st</sup> speaker of the proposition team, you have 5 minutes, your time begins when you start your speech”
2. Start the time once the speaker starts talking.
3. While the speaker is talking take notes on the arguments being made on your flowchart so you can reference them after the round.
4. Give the debater their 1 minute remaining warning.
5. Once the debater is done with their speech thank them for their remarks.
6. Each debater is offered two minutes of prep time before their round (online format only) so ask the debater if they’d like to use their prep time. “1<sup>st</sup> Speaker from the opposition team, you have two minutes of prep time do you wish to use it?”
  1. If the debater replies “Yes” start the timer and use that time to score the debater on the rubric and make any notes for constructive feedback here as well. Start the speech once those two minutes are up, or if the judges need more time to finish scoring, finish scoring before calling the debater up.
  2. If the debater replies “No” say, “okay the judges will take a moment to score the previous speech”. Score the speaker and then immediately proceed with the next speaker when you have finished scoring

# Once the 3<sup>rd</sup> Speakers Are Up

Announce the following:

1. The timing for these last two speeches is 3 minutes long.
2. No new points and arguments are to be made in these final speeches.
3. They will still receive a time warning with 1 minute remaining in their speech the same way the other speakers have.

Once the debate has concluded, thank the debaters for a good round and say that “the judges will now step away to deliberate. Once we return we will provide the winner and feedback”.

Once isolated from the debate, determine the winner based on the guidelines in the previous section. Determine the best speaker by seeing which debater had the highest average score across all the judges.

After deliberation start by providing feedback to the competitors. The goal is to help them improve in the later rounds, so avoid spending too much time on specific arguments and more so fundamental skills they can build on. (Increase cohesion between teammates, lay a roadmap before the speech starts, spend more time explaining how your point relates to the topic etc.)

Finally announce the best speaker and winning team. Tell them the key factors you weighed when determining the winner and how the winning team met them. **ONLY ANNOUNCE WINNERS IN PRELIM DEBATES – NOT QUARTER/SEMI-FINAL ROUNDS**

# Important Points to Remember

- Logic and soundness of arguments and refutations is of utmost importance.
- 
- We ask the judges to judge by the criteria put forward by the debaters themselves.
- Please do not use any personal biases or opinions or preferences/beliefs in determining who won.
- Remember burden of proof lies with Proposition. Did they make a case? Did they answer all refutations and points of the opposition adequately. Did they fully make the case. Then they win. If the opposition poked holes that they could not fill, not left any arguments of opp unanswered or inadequately answered etc. then they lose.
- Do not consult with other judges when scoring the debaters.
- **Study the rubric well in advance of the tournament!**
- Beware of difference in public speaking and debating. Do not let statistics, quotations impress you. They are only important if they help demonstrate or prove a point and just as important as an example that does the same thing

# Case Example

- Say the 3rd speaker's rebuttal is an excellent summation of the proposition's arguments and justified refutations. However, though he/she may provide an excellent summary, say the points they summarized were not quite as excellent. So, while the speaker's arguments were not very strong (because the whole team's arguments were not), he/she did an excellent job of working with what they had. How should judges weigh on something like that? Can we give the speaker high individual points and still have the opposition win?
  - *Absolutely. It happens more often than you would think that the team with higher cumulative points loses the debate and the team that scores lower points wins the debate. Also the best speaker could be from the losing team. When scoring, you as a judge should score the individual speakers right after their speech. This is a score for only their speech. However, when deciding who won or lost the debate, the scores should have nothing to do with it*

Next you answer the following questions:

Did the proposition make a case? In this you will have to look at their line of reasoning, the AREs, and the arguments brought forth.

Did the opposition show that the case was either flawed, inadequate or a dangerous opinion in any way? Were there refutations complete? Look for the 4-step refutation or other complete ways of refutation.

Were the rejoinders that the proposition brought up adequate in reinstating their stance and did they address all rebuttals brought up?



# APPENDIX



# Appendix: Actual Rubric



MYDT Rubric  
(Word Doc)

# Appendix: Cross-Ex, Timing, Inter-Team Comms

## 1. Cross Examination

- The entirety of the cross examination will last a maximum of 3 minutes or 3 questions, whichever comes first. This includes prep time. The judge will announce when the cross examination time has ended.
- After a speech, all cross examination must be done by one person.
- Each debater on a team can only cross examine once during a debate. E.g., if a team's 3rd speaker cross examined on the first speech, then only the 1st or 2nd speaker can cross examine on the second speech.
- BEST PRACTICE: It is best to ask 3 great yes/no style leading questions that poke holes in your opponent's argument. Next best is to ask 1-2 good yes/no style leading questions. A neutral position is to ask no questions which generally will not hurt you. Worst is to ask 3 bad questions which tend to be open ended and simply allow your opponent to strengthen their argument on your time.
- Everyone stays seated at all times.

## 2. Timing

- TIMING SUMMARY: (a) speech: up to 5 or 3 minutes; (b) cross examination: up to 3 minutes; (c) interstitial time (between the cross examination period and the next speech): up to 2 minutes.
- CAVEAT: The judge of each debate is the ultimate arbiter of time.
- NOTE: At the end of the hour allotted for each debate, all breakout rooms will automatically close and everyone will be routed back to the main room.

## 3. Communication

- Under no circumstances should debaters receive instruction from coaches, parents, or anyone else other than their teammates while the debate is in session. As noted above, during a speech, a speaker cannot receive help from anyone, including a teammate.

# Appendix: Impromptu Prep and Zoom Etiquette

## 4. Impromptu Debates

Teams will be assigned prop/opp sides during 20 minute prep time.

## 5. Zoom/Virtual Etiquette:

- All debaters will be required to have their webcam turned on when speaking.
- Everyone signed into the MYDT 2020 Zoom meeting must follow the following name designations (*cf.* “Logistics”, below).
  - Debaters
    - In the **main room**: Name + Team (e.g. “Sadia Siddiqui, MUNA 1”)
    - In the **breakout room**: Name + Speaking Position (e.g. “Sadia Siddiqui, Prop 1”).
- CAMERA SUMMARY: (a) everyone (including spectators) has their camera ON prior to the debate; (b) once debate commences, everyone turns their camera OFF, except the speaker(s) and judge(s).
- During cross examination both the debater who just finished speaking and the opposing debater performing the cross examination will have their camera ON and positioned as if they were speaking. Both should remain seated (*cf.* “Cross Examination” above).
- Judges will use the Zoom “clap” feature 1 minute prior to stop time and will call time at stop time, or another method confirmed by the judges and team before the round starts.

# Appendix: Connection Issues

## 6. Internet Interruption

- **In the event that a speaker's speech drops or becomes incomprehensible because e.g., the speaker's device malfunctions or because of Wi-Fi/internet connection issues, the speaker must immediately call into the MYDT 2021 Zoom meeting and will be directed back to their debate to complete their speech. Call-in information will be made available in advance.**
- **In the event the speaker is unable to call into the Zoom meeting, they may take other measures such as calling a teammate who may put them on speakerphone.**
- **Please note that a teammate may not speak on behalf of the dropped speaker.**
- **The speaker will not get an extension in speaking time in case of interruption. E.g., if the Prop 1 speaker's internet drops at minute 2 of their 5 minute speech, and it takes another minute to call in, they will only get another 2 minutes to complete their speech.**
- **The judges will determine their score based on what the speaker could communicate comprehensibly. E.g., in the above example, Prop 1 only got 3 minutes of speaking time, and they will be judged on those three minutes. The standard is not reduced for this speaker. They will be scored the same as someone who spoke for 3 minutes out of their five in any other circumstance.**

Questions? – If you require any clarification on the rules/guidelines here please contact us and we will update this document with clarifications.

