INTRODUCTION TO WORLDS STYLE
HEART OF EUROPE DEBATING TOURNAMENT

Adapted from World Schools Debating Championships (www.schoolsdebate.com). Notes for Adjudicators - compiled by Christopher Erskine (Australia) with Rosemary Dixon and Andrew Stockley (NZ), Elizabeth Virgo (Bermuda) and David Pritchard (Wales).

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Introduction: The Worlds Style

The rules of debate at the World Schools Debating Championship are a unique blend of rules from different nations. No single country invented the style, and no single country uses the style as its own national standard.

Each debate has two teams. Each team has three debaters, who each speak once. After each speaker has spoken once, each team has one reply speech. This can be given by the first or second speaker on the team. The reply speech is half the length of the main speeches. During the main speeches the opposing team can offer points of information (see section 5). However, no points may be offered during the reply speeches.

The motions that the teams debate are general issues rather than specific programs or proposals. Thus the government team may have to argue in favour of voluntary euthanasia as a principle: it would not have to put forward a specific legislative proposal to implement euthanasia except, perhaps, to define the motion or demonstrate that regulating euthanasia is practical. The emphasis is upon the principle, not the specifics.

The debate is between teams, not individuals. Each team member has a specific part of the team case to present, and must also attack the other side and defend the team from attack. As the debate progresses, more and more time must be spent dealing with issues already raised in the debate, and less and less time must be spent on new argument and issues.

Each team must persuade the audience that its argument is superior. To do this it must present sound logical arguments, it must present them in an interesting and persuasive speaking style, and it must structure and prioritise its arguments. All three aspects of debate are given emphasis. This competition does not encourage just pure argument or pure rhetoric on their own, but an effective blend of both.

It is an international contest. Issues must have an international perspective, examples must be relevant to the global community, and there must be tolerance of difference to a far higher degree than in national or local competitions. In particular there must be tolerance of differences in language and accent, or if we are not careful the English language can divide us instead of uniting us.

The competition includes teams of vastly different background, not only in debating but even in English itself. While each team nurtures the hope that it may win the Grand Final, mere participation is a worthwhile experience in itself for all the teams. Success in the competition can be measured according to who wins the Grand Final : success can also be measured by exposure to new ideas and development of personal skills. Both aspects of success must be given due allowance by judges.

Before discussing specific matters, let me outline three fundamental principles :

1. A good argument is a good argument, no matter where a team comes from.

2. Everybody else except you has a funny accent.

3. Just because teams back home wouldn't do it doesn't make it wrong.

The first principle says that logic is universal: your country doesn't have a monopoly on it. To put it another way, don't prejudge debates by the nationality or background of the teams. Non-English-speaking teams have defeated some of the top teams in past years, teams from small nations have won the Grand Final, and teams from countries in their inaugural year in the tournament have beaten long-established teams.

The second principle says that you should be prepared for major differences from what you are used to back home - accents, terminology, even the examples used to illustrate an argument. Your first international debate can be a real culture shock.

The third principle says that not everything that we do back home is essential to good debating. Each country has its own style of debating, which leads to particular national rules about what debaters can and can't do. But in the different style at a world competition. some of these rules from back home might be inappropriate. So leave your rule books in your suitcase and concentrate on the essentials of good debating.

1 The Marksheet

Marks are awarded to each speaker as follows:

Content	40
Style	40
Strategy	20
TOTAL	100

In the reply speeches, the marks are halved. There is no global mark for teamwork.

Remember that this is a different marksheet from what you are used to at home. You can't judge these debates by adapting the international marksheet to fit domestic marksheets with which you are more familiar. So leave your own marksheet in your suitcase along with your national rule books, and look at this mark sheet with no preconceptions of what the categories mean.

1.1 Content

Content covers the arguments that are used, divorced from the speaking style. It is as if you are seeing the arguments written down rather than spoken. You must assess the weight of the arguments without being influenced by the magnificence of the orator that presented them.

Content will also include an assessment of the weight of rebuttal or clash. This assessment must be done from the standpoint of the average reasonable person.

The adjudicator's job is to assess the strength of an argument regardless of whether the other team is able to knock it down. If a team introduces a weak argument, it will not score highly in content even if the other team doesn't t refute it. Two consequences flow from this, however:

First, if a major team argument is plainly weak, an opposing team which doesn't refute it may well have committed a greater sin than the team which introduced it. In effect the team has let the other team get away with a weak argument. This is not an automatic rule, but is true in many cases. Of course, it must be a major argument, not a minor example which the opposing team correctly chooses to ignore in favour of attacking more significant points.

Second, adjudicators have to be careful not to be influenced by their own beliefs and prejudices, nor by their own specialised knowledge. For example, if you are a lawyer and you know that a team's argument was debunked by the International Court of Justice last week, you should probably not take into account this special knowledge unless the ICJ's decision was a matter of extreme public notoriety.

Distancing oneself from personal attitudes is particularly difficult in international competitions. Teams may use examples from your part of the world that you know to be wrong, but would you expect people from other countries to know that the example is wrong ? For example, I doubt that I would penalise a team which had an incomplete though superficially correct understanding of Australian foreign policy. But I would be less understanding of a team which displayed an incomplete understanding of American or Japanese foreign policy, for example, because of the importance of' those countries in so many international issues.

1.2 Style

The term is perhaps misleading. Adjudicators are not looking for speakers who are *stylish*, but rather they are looking at the *style* of the speakers.

Style covers the way the speakers speak. As has already been noted, this can be done in many ways, in funny accents and with the use of strange terminology. Put the strangeness out of your mind and be tolerant of different ways of presenting arguments.

There are some particular things that you need to be warned about in advance:

Debaters from some countries (especially Australia and New Zealand) tend to speak very quickly and can be quite aggressive. Debaters from other countries (especially North America) tend to be slower and more conversational.

For some teams, English is a second language and there are occasionally strong accents, odd words and (once or twice) a pause while the speaker thinks how to express the thought in English.

North American teams tend to use large foolscap pads and speak behind lecterns: Australian and New Zealand debaters use small palm cards and speak in front of the lectern.

None of this matters!

Yet things as trivial as the use of palm cards and standing in front of lectern have been commented on in international debates, on one occasion a Grand Final! Any adjudicator who finds these things important should seriously consider whether they should be adjudicating in this competition. You will be seeing highly skilled debaters presenting very sophisticated arguments. If the best you can say is that they should be using palm cards rather than writing pads, you've probably missed the point of the debate.

Of course a speaker's style may cease to be an expression of a particular national debating style and become intensely irritating to everyone. For example there is still a speed limit on speaking, even though it may be higher than you are used to back home. But be tolerant of differences, and only intervene when a speaker's style has gone beyond what everyone would accept.

1.2.1 Accents and National Characteristics

Linguists tell us that some accents are more "acceptable" than others. For example, BBC Southern English has become the Received Pronunciation in Britain. Regional accents such as West Country are quaint and rustic, but are often thought to be a handicap for someone who wants to be successful in politics or big business.

Virtually every English speaking country faces this problem. It affects accents within a country, and also accents between countries. The comedian Peter Sellers was responsible for a great deal of humour at the expense of Indian accents, yet in reality these accents are no more lilting or incomprehensible than Welsh or Irish accents. Australians snigger at New Zealand accents - but other countries can't tell the difference between them.

Teams should not be penalised just because their accent is less acceptable than others. Nor should teams be rewarded for the good fortune of coming from a region whose accent is more acceptable than others. Of course nobody would consciously penalise a team in this way, but the influences of acceptability of accents are subtle and pernicious. Can we truly place our hand on our heart at the end of a debate and say that we were not swayed by the "cuteness" of one team's accent or the "stridency" of another's? Perhaps we weren't: speakers can be cute or strident in the way they speak but were we marking the *speaker* or the *accent*?

There is a further and more difficult issue involved here. Teams from non-English speaking backgrounds may well speak English with a "foreign" accent. We tend to judge them more harshly because of this fact, whether we are conscious of it or not; but if we analyse closely the way these teams speak English, we find that many of them are very fluent in English and are readily understandable. If anything some of these teams are more understandable than the occasional broad Glaswegian or high-speed Australian that we get from native English speaking teams.

However, while we must give due credit to teams for whom English is a second language, this is not the same thing as giving credit to these teams for the very difficult task of debating in a foreign language. Judges might be tempted to be sympathetic and mark these teams on a more generous scale. This is against the rules (*see Rule 18(b)*).

Non-English-speaking teams take part in the competition on the same footing as native English speaking teams. They take part knowing that they will be against teams for whom English is a first language. If this sometimes leads to one-sided debates, that is a fact of life in the competition and should be reflected in the marks. But if they are genuinely as fluent and persuasive as the native English speakers, one should mark them accordingly.

1.3 Strategy

Strategy requires some attention. I think it covers two concepts:

1. the **structure and timing** of the speech, and

2. whether the speaker understood the **issues** of the debate.

These matters are sufficiently important to justify taking them separately.

1.3.1 Structure and timing

A good speech has a clear beginning, middle and end. Along the way there are signposts to help us see where the speaker is going. The sequence of arguments is logical and flows naturally from point to point. This is as true of a first speaker outlining the government case as it is of the third speaker rebutting the government case. Good speech structure, therefore is one component of strategy.

Timing is also important, but it must not be taken to extremes. There are two aspects to timing.

1. speaking within the allowed time limit, and

2. giving an appropriate amount of time to the issues in the speech.

As to the first, a speaker who goes significantly over time (for example, 9 minutes in an 8 minute speech) ought to get a penalty . Equally, a speaker who goes significantly under time (for example, 7 minutes in an 8 minute speech) in most cases would get a similar penalty. Bear in mind, however, that timing is only one element of strategy. A speaker whose only sin is to go over time might still get a reasonable strategy mark if every other aspect of strategy was quite outstanding. It would not be a brilliant mark - there would still be a penalty - but it

would not automatically be a very low mark either. It all depends how good the rest of the elements of strategy were.

As to the second, a speaker ought to give priority to important issues and leave unimportant ones to later. For example it is generally a good idea for a rebuttal speaker (i.e. anyone other than the first speaker for the government) to begin with the attack on the other side before going on to the speaker's positive case This is because it is more logical to get rid of the opposing argument first before trying to put something in its place.

A speaker should also give more time to important issues. If there is a critical point that buttresses the whole of that team's case, it ought to get a fair amount of time so that it can be properly established. But if there is a point that is fairly trivial, it doesn't deserve more than a trivial amount of time.

So the adjudicator must weigh up not only the strength of the arguments in the content category, but also the proper time and priority that was given to them in the strategy category.

1.3.2 Understanding the issues

Closely related to the last point is that debaters should understand what the important issues were in the debate. It is a waste of time for a rebuttal speaker to deal with trivial points if crucial arguments are left unanswered. Such a speaker would not understand the important issues of the debate, and should not score well in strategy. By contrast, a speaker who understood what the important issues were and dealt with them thoroughly should score well in strategy.

It is very important that adjudicators understand the difference between strategy and content. Imagine a debate where a speaker answers the critical issues with some weak rebuttal. This speaker should get poor marks for *content*, because the rebuttal was weak. But the speaker should get reasonable marks for *strategy*, because the right arguments were being addressed.

2 Logical Argument

There are two ways to prove that a proposition is true.

1. You can look at every known instance and show that in each case the proposition holds good.

2. You can analyse the proposition and show that it is supported by other known principles.

In debating it is usually impossible to use the first type of reasoning, because we debate generalisations with millions if not billions of known instances. So, we have to use the second type of reasoning. However, an amazing number of debaters don't seem to understand the difference.

2.1 A Hypothetical Example

Suppose that two teams are debating the motion that "this house believes that we are all feminists now". The government chooses to interpret the motion reasonably literally: How does it prove its case?

Obviously it cannot ask everybody in the world whether or not they are feminists. Nor can it rely upon opinion polls: if the motion was as simple to prove as that, it wouldn't have been set for debate. Instead, it is going to have to make some generalisations about the motion in order to present a coherent argument within the time allowed.

For example, it could look at the public attitudes of important institutions in society such as governments big businesses, schools, religions, the media and sport. Part of its reasoning process would be that when the major institutions change their attitudes they either reflect the views of' the general public or, perhaps, lead the general public towards new attitudes.

The first government speaker could outline a central thesis that went something like this: "In today's society the major institutions generally adopt feminist attitudes. These institutions either lead society (such as the media) or reflect the views of the majority in society (such as parliaments and big business).

From that point onwards we know what the government team Is going to prove. When it discusses the role and attitudes of each major institution in society we can see why it is doing it and where the argument is going. The same thesis will run through all three government speakers so that all of them have made their contribution to proving the government case.

I don't want to get side-tracked into an argument whether this is a winning case or not. Rather, I want to illustrate the point that the government team has to present a generalised case and prove it logically, rather than relying upon large numbers of examples in the hope that these will do the job instead.

2.2 One Case or Several?

If we accept that a case has to be a central thesis supported by each speaker, it is obvious that a team cannot be internally contradictory in its team case, it is a debate between teams, not a discussion between 6 individuals. All speakers on a team must be contributing to the same case, not to different ones.

Using the feminist example above, suppose that the first government speaker had outlined the case set out above. The second speaker could not present an argument that said that we were all hypocrites who merely gave lip-service to feminism. While this is a valid government case it is quite inconsistent with the case presented by the first speaker, if we were all hypocrites, then the major institutions in society would not be reflecting any general attitude in support of feminism.

2.3 Rebuttal or Clash

The use of generalised cases has consequences for rebuttal or clash. The opposition team cannot concentrate on attacking the examples used by the government. The examples might

be weak, but the central case might still be sound. Instead, it will have to concentrate on attacking that case, because that is where the debate actually lies.

In the feminist motion above, suppose that the government team used as an example the pro-feminist attitudes of one newspaper from a small country town. If the opposition team attacked just that example, it would show only that the government has chosen a particularly weak example to illustrate its argument. But the government case might still be sound. It might be true that the media generally had feminist attitudes, even if the example it chose to illustrate the point was a poor one.

Therefore, to succeed in this part of the debate, the opposition would have to show that the media generally did not have pro-feminist attitudes. Of course: It could ridicule the government: "Is such a trivial example the best that you can find to illustrate your case?". But this would merely be part of the process of attacking the general proposition that the media is pro-feminist rather than an end in itself.

There is another consequence for rebuttal. It may be that the government has used a number of examples to illustrate the same point. If they can all be disposed of with the same piece of rebuttal, the opposition does not have to attack each of the examples individually as well.

For example, suppose that the government in the feminist debate looked at the attitudes towards feminism in the major religions of the country. The opposition could respond in two ways to this argument. It could rebut the supposedly pro-feminist attitudes in each of those religions. Alternatively it could argue that religion plays such a minor role in society that the feminist attitudes of religions are largely irrelevant to the debate. Thus it would be unnecessary for it to deal with each example of a major religion dealt with by the government, because *all* of them are irrelevant according to its arguments.

2.4 The Reply Speech

The thematic approach to argument outlined above becomes critical in the reply speeches. These have been described as "an adjudication from our side" and really amount to an overview of the major issues in the debate.

A reply speaker does not have time to deal with small arguments or individual examples. The speaker must deal with the two or three major issues in the debate in global terms, showing how they favour the speaker's team and work against the opposition team. As a general rule, a reply speaker who descends to the level of dealing with individual examples probably doesn't understand either the issues of the debate or the principles of good argument.

3 Three-a-Side Debating

Three-a-side debating is not just a two-a-side debate with an extra speaker on each side. There is a clear progression from the opening speaker who presents entirely new material to the closing speaker who deals entirely with what has been said by the previous 5 speakers. Each team has to work closely together, and understand that they are members of a team rather than individuals.

We can all agree on that part, but there are two particular issues that have arisen in previous World Championships that need some further discussion.

3.1 The Case Division

With three speakers on a team, the positive argument has to be divided between the first two (and perhaps the third government as well). This sounds very simple, but there is one major principle that must be looked at more closely.

The division cannot be along the steps of the team case, but instead has to be along some other lines. This sounds like an essay in university logic, so let me illustrate the point with an actual debate from the 1990 Championships.

The motion for debate was "that Mr Gorbachev's reforms will fail" (amazing how out of date these motions have become in just a few years!).

The first government set out what Mr Gorbachev's reforms were.

The second government demonstrated the growing backlash to those reforms.

The third government tied this together by showing that because of the scale of the backlash, the reforms would fail.

This case was quite logical. But at the end of the first government speaker, what did the opposition have to refute? The answer was, absolutely nothing. There was no disagreement on what the reforms were, so there was no debate at this stage. At the end of the second government speaker, there was still nothing to refute. The opposition agreed entirely that there was a backlash. We were now two-thirds of the way through the debate, and we were yet to have a debate! It was only at the third speakers that any debate happened at all, because this was the first point where there was any disagreement between the teams. Debate is not confined to the third speakers. It takes place throughout the debate. While early speakers must concentrate on presenting positive arguments, they still have some obligations to rebut the other side. But if all this has to wait until the third speakers, it means that over 80% of the debate is over before anyone gets to debate anything, it also means that the government sets just one short reply speech in which to deal with the opposition's attacks.

The problem with this case division was that it divided the argument along the steps of the reasoning process. An opposition team does not have to disagree with all those steps. So long as it disagrees with the final conclusion, it can still win a debate.

So the government must find some other way of dividing the argument. It can be on significant themes, or (less attractively) on examples. For example, in the debate discussed above the first speaker might look at reforms in economic policy, while the second speaker looks at reforms in the military and the government.

The problem with this division is that both speakers would be repeating the same major argument and merely using different examples to illustrate it. To that extent it might be repetitive and boring. But the important point is that each speech can stand on its own to

prove that the whole case is true in at least some situations. It is only in this way that a speech can be rebutted, and thus that a debate can take place.

3.2 The Opposition Case

The opposition is not obliged to present its own positive case in world championship debates. It can, if it wishes, merely attack the government case throughout without putting up a case of its own. However, this is potentially weak, and most opposition teams in fact present their own positive argument as well.

This proceeds in much the same way as the government's with one important exception. The third opposition's job is primarily rebuttal of what has gone before. This speaker can (but does not have to) introduce a small line of argument which has been clearly outlined in advance by the opening speakers and which ties in with the opposition case. But she or he cannot introduce any substantial new argument, especially one that has not been clearly outlined in advance by earlier speakers. The reason is obvious: the government gets only one brief reply speech in which to deal with it. This is unfair, and also makes the bulk of the debate meaningless because the significant arguments have taken so long to come out and be discussed.

In a debate in the 1992 Championships, one opposition team left its major argument until the third speaker. The argument was announced by the first speaker in only the most elliptical terms. The third speaker refused all points of information, and instead of rebuttal presented the major new argument in the bulk of his speech. No matter hour good the argument was, it could not have won the debate. Because their team's most important argument had been left so late, the first two opposition speakers had little to say and were a long way behind their opponents from the government team. The third speaker had to lose marks for refusing points of information, and also strategy and content marks for introducing such a substantial amount of new argument.

3.3 The Roles of the Speakers

The debate begins with a speaker whose arguments are entirely new. As it goes on, more and more time is spent dealing with what has been said by previous speakers, and less and less comes in that is new. By the end of the debate there is no new argument, and the speakers deal only with what has gone before.

If you were to graph this, there would be a line dropping from 100% new matter at first government to almost O% at third opposition and replies, and a corresponding line rising from O% rebuttal at first government to almost 100% rebuttal at third opposition and replies.

The first government defines the motion, outlines the government case, announces the case division, and presents her or his part of the case.

The first opposition deals with the definition if it is a problem, explains the important differences between the two team cases, and either outlines the opposition case, announces the case division, and presents her or his part of the case, oroutlines the opposition's rebuttal case (i.e. the broad themes the opposition will use throughout the debate to rebut the government case) and expands on it.

The difference between these two approaches depends on whether the opposition is content just to present a rebuttal case, or takes the stronger route and presents its own alternative case as well.

The second government defends the government definition (if required) and case from the opposition attacks, rebuts the opposition case, and proceeds with her or his part of the government case. Somewhere around 2 to 3 minutes into the speech the speaker will turn from attacking the opposition to presenting the new part of the argument.

The second opposition does much the same as the second government, If the opposition is presenting its own alternative case as well, this speaker will turn from attacking the government to presenting the new part of the argument somewhere around 3 to 4 minutes into the speech.

The third government is going to spend a large part of her or his time attacking the other side. However, she or he can have a small part of the government case to present - Perhaps 1 or 2 minutes at the most. This is not obligatory, although many teams do it.

The third opposition is going to spend most of her or his time attacking the other side, rather than presenting significant new arguments, She or he can have an even smaller part of the opposition case to present, but again this is not obligatory. Note that the opposition reply follows straight on from this speech, so it is better for the third opposition to deal with the detail of the government case and leave the broad overview to the reply speech.The reply speeches are not going to delve into fine detail, but will take a broad approach to the issues of the debate. They should also summarise their own case either as part the analysis of the issues or towards the end of the speech as a separate section. For obvious reasons the reply speeches cannot introduce new arguments. Not only is this unfair but a complete misunderstanding of the role of reply speeches The reply speech is a summing up of the whole debate, not a chance to introduce new ideas.

4 Motions

4.1 Weighted motions

In the 1992 Championships most teams debated the motion "that this house would ban all alcoholic drinks". The consensus among the judges was that the motion was heavily weighted against the government. Yet look what happened in three different debates on this motion when the judges grappled with the weighting of the motion:

in the first, the judges weighted the debate to the government because the motion was weighted the other way - in other words, they compensated the government in marks for having such a tough side to argue;

in the second, the judges felt that weighting was impossible to assess, and did not try to redress the balance;

in the third, the judges decided not to redress the weighting because the government team had actually chosen to be the government and thus voluntarily taken the harder side.

The problem here is the inconsistency. If the opposition team which narrowly lost the first debate had had the judges from the second debate, it would have won convincingly.

It is very hard for judges to assess just what advantage one team has because of the motion. It is better not to try to compensate for perceived advantages, and leave it to those who set the motions to choose reasonably balanced ones.

4.2 General Motions - From What Perspective

In national debating it is sometimes legitimate to take a motion that is expressed very broadly and debate it in the context of some national issue of the day. For example, in Australia we might approach a motion "that feminism has won" in the context of Australian attitudes to feminism, rather than dealing with feminism globally. Of course, you don't have to, but such a limitation can sometimes be acceptable.

At the international level however, such a limitation is generally not acceptable. The competition includes a diverse range of countries and it is certainly not confined to one group of countries such as liberal western democracies or countries of the third world. This means that general motions have to be taken in the context of' the whole world, not one part of the world.

Once again, we have to rely upon those who set motions to be sensible. A debate on the motion "that God is dead' is meaningful to western nations where religion has been in decline for some time. But it is fairly meaningless to many Islamic nations which are undergoing a religious revival. Such a motion would not be a sensible one to set at a world competition because the experience of different parts of the world is so varied that it makes debate almost impossible.

And for those used to North American rules, time-setting and place-setting are not allowed. Time-setting puts the motion In a particular era in history. Place-setting puts the motion in a particular place. Thus we could time- and place-set the motion "that God is dead" in Israel shortly before the birth of Christ and argue the motion as if we were alive in that place at that time. But in World rules we can't, because this is not allowed.

4.3 Objectivity in Judging

It goes without saying that judges have to be as objective as possible. But in the international context this causes some interesting problems, because national perspectives on issues can be so different.

One of the most spectacular instances of this occurred in 1992 when Australia debated Pakistan on the motion "that the West should leave the Middle East alone". Australia, like most western countries, accepted without question that Israel had a right to exist, and developed its argument assuming this basic proposition. But Pakistan questioned this proposition, asserting that Israel had no right to exist.

It was a fascinating debate in which many apparently unarguable assumptions were argued strenuously. And if it had been judged by an Israeli judge, what then? This is not a dig at Middle Eastern attitudes, but an instance where an international debate raised highly

contentious issues which required judges to step outside their own narrow perspectives and try to judge a debate from the standpoint of a hypothetical reasonable citizen of the world.

Objectivity in intentional debating is much harder than in national debating. Our views on the world are shaped to a large extent by our national media.

Take the example of European and American farm subsidies. In Europe and America the media emphasis is frequently on the effects on local farmers if the subsidies were withdrawn. But in Australia and Canada the media concentrates on the serious adverse effects of those subsidies on their own farmers. Thus a debate between, say, Australia and the USA where farm subsidies arose as an issue could be difficult to judge because national perspectives might tend to colour the judges' assessment of the weight of the various arguments.

Judges also have to recognise that some motions require teams to take hard options in argument rather than soft ones. If the motion were "that we should abolish third world debts", the opposition would almost certainly have to argue the need for international financial responsibility by governments, no matter how tough and unfeeling this may sound. The best debates are often ones between two strongly opposed arguments, rather than between two wishy-washy cases that try to compromise at every opportunity.

5 Points of Information

Points of information were borrowed from British debating. However, in a couple of respects they have taken on a life of their own in the World Championships, and have to be treated as a phenomenon new to British and non-British judges alike.

A point of information is offered in the course of a speech by a member of the opposing team. The speaker may either accept the point or decline it. If accepted, the opponent may make a short point or ask a short question that deals with some issue in the debate (preferably one just made by the speaker). It is, if you like, a formal interjection.

5.1 Debating is More than a Speech

Points of information bring about a major change in the role of speakers in a debate. In this style each speaker must take part in the debate from beginning to end, not just during their own speech. A first speaker for the government continues to play an active role in the debate even when the third speaker for the opposition is speaking. Equally, the third speaker for the opposition must play an active role in the debate when the first speaker for the government is speaking.

The speakers play this role by offering points of information. Even if the points are not accepted, they must still demonstrate that they are involved in the debate by at least offering. A speaker who takes no part in the debate other than by making a speech should lose marks for content and strategy - content for failing to take advantage of opportunities, strategy for failing to understand the role of a speaker under this style.

Equally, speakers must ensure that they accept at least some points of information during their speech. In an 8 minute speech, taking at least 2 would be expected (depending, of course, on how many are offered). A speaker who fails to accept any points of information

must lose marks for content (failing to allow the other side to make points, thus reducing the amount of direct clash between the two teams) and particularly strategy (for not understanding the role of the speakers in this style - or, to put it another way, for cowardice!). Of course, a speaker who takes too many will almost certainly lose control of the speech and thus lose marks for style and probably also for strategy (poor speech structure) and content as well.

5.2 The Etiquette of Points of Information

A point of information is offered by standing and saying "Point of information;' or something similar. The speaker on the floor is not obliged to accept every point. She or he may - ask the interrupter to sit downfinish the sentence and then accept the point, oraccept the point then and there.

More than one member of the opposing team may rise simultaneously. The speaker on the floor may decline all or some, and may choose which one to take. The others then sit down. Opposing speakers must sometimes tread a fine line between the legitimate offering of points of information on the one hand, and barracking on the other. The fact that points must be offered makes the style more aggressive and more prone to interruptions. However, continuous offering by a team really amounts to excessive interruption and is barracking. This should incur penalties in style for the team members involved.

It is impossible to put a figure on how many points of information a team may offer before its behaviour constitutes barracking. Judges should determine when the offering of points of information, far from adding to the debate, begins to infringe on the right and/or ability of the speaker to address the audience. This determination requires sensitivity to the context of the particular debate: two well-matched and highly-skilled teams may offer each other many points of information without disrupting the debate or unsettling the speaker on the floor, but points offered at this same high rate to a speaker who is less confident may constitute barracking. In general, speakers should not offer points of information only a few seconds after a previous offer has been declined or while the speaker on the floor is clearly in the early stages of answering a point of information she just accepted: frequent violations of these principles might reasonably be penalized.

The point of information may be in the form of a question to the person making a speech, or it may be a remark addressed through the person chairing the debate. Some teams tend to use the latter format, while most teams tend to ask a question. Let it be clear that either format is perfectly acceptable.

The point of information must be brief. 10 to 15 seconds is the norm, and over that the interrupter should be told to sit down by the speaker. As well, when the person making the speech understands the point, she or he can tell the interrupter to sit down - the speaker does not have to let the point get right through to the end in all cases. Always remember that the speaker who is making the speech has complete control of points of information - when to accept them, whether to accept them and how long they should go on for.

Which, of course, puts a premium on clear simple points. In one debate the interrupter began by saying "I may be particularly dense... " and paused, whereupon the speaker said

"yes you are" and continued with his speech. This was a waste of a good opportunity, all because the interrupter chose to indulge in pompous oratory rather than a crisp clear point.

5.3 Marking Points of Information

It is relatively easy to mark the *responses* to points of' information, because each response is incorporated into the speech and that is where it gets marked.

The problems come in marking the *offering* of points of information, because speakers will offer points other than during their own speech, at a time when the judge is making notes about another speaker altogether.

To begin with there is a practical problem. Judges must have some system of recording points of information from the beginning of the debate even for speakers who will not speak until the end of the debate. In other words, during the first speaker for the government, a judge must be able to record something about the offering of points of information by the third speaker of the opposition.

A simple solution has been devised in Australia by Annette Whiley. Each judge has a separate sheet of paper, divided into six boxes (one line down the middle, three across the page). Each box represents the offering of points by a speaker. During the first speaker for the government, the three boxes on the right hand side will be used to record the offering of points by the three opposition speakers. A simple tallymark shows one was offered. If one was accepted, a brief note about it can be included in the box. At the end of the debate this allows the judge to see what sort of contribution was being made by each speaker in offering points of information.

At the 1994 National Schools Championships in Australia we experimented with a separate category worth 5 marks for the offering of points of information. On the whole I don't think this worked very well. So we seem to be back with marking the offering of points within each speaker's speech marks.

A speaker's speech mark should only be adjusted if her contribution to the debate through offering points of information differed significantly from her contribution in her speech. (Contribution to the debate through offering points of information involves both the quantity of points of information offered and the quality of those accepted: speakers should not be penalized if they offer plenty of points but none is accepted.) A speaker's speech mark may be adjusted by up to two marks in either direction to take account of points of information offered: if such an adjustment is being made, the judge should write, e.g., +1 or -2 in the appropriate column on the ballot. So, a speaker whose speech deserved a 70 but who offered remarkably good points of information might receive an overall mark of 71, or perhaps 72 if the points were truly outstanding. A speaker whose speech deserved a 76 but who offered almost no points of information might receive an overall mark of 74 or 75. But a speaker whose speech deserved a 64 should not lose marks for failing to offer many points of information, because his contribution through offering points was no worse than his speech. Likewise, a speaker whose speech deserved a 78 does not get extra marks for making a couple of very good points of information, because those points were no better than her speech

A summary of how to mark points of information is as follows:

The primary component of the speaker's marks is the speaker's speech.

That mark can **increase** by up to a couple of marks if the speaker offered superb points of information during the rest of the debate.

That mark can **decrease** by up to a couple of marks if the speaker:

(i) offered no points of information (or almost none) during the rest of the debate;
(ii) offered bad points of information during the rest of the debate;
(iii) failed to accept points of information during her or his own speech.

Note that just because the response to a point of information was good, it doesn't mean that the point was not a good one. Don't judge the worth of the point on the response. After all if a motion is strongly arguable on both sides, then the major points on each side should have good counter-arguments.

6 Marking Standard

Consistency is a virtue. It ought to be possible for a debater to pick up a marksheet from any judge and work out how good the debate was just from the marks that were offered.

But if one judge thinks a good speech was worth 95% and another judge thought it was just as good and therefore worth 75%, we have a problem.

Marking standards are imposed in every competition. They are necessarily arbitrary. There is no reason why any particular standard is better than any other. But there must be a standard, and here it is.

The expected range of marks is from 60% for an appalling speech to 80% for a brilliant one.

A good average speech at this competition is worth 70%.

Judges shall never give a speaker mark greater than 80 or less than 60.

It is true that this marking standard means that we are really marking each speaker out of 20. But that doesn't matter. A standard is a standard, and this is what should be used.

6.1 A Relative Absolute, or Merely Relative

Adopting this standard means that you do not mark the first government speaker at 70 and mark everybody else up or down from that point. Instead, you must have a mental picture of a good average speech for this competition and mark every speaker including the first government) according to that hypothetical. Thus the first government is as likely as the third opposition to score 80 or 60.

This allows some basis of comparison between marks in different debates (although the system isn't foolproof). The alternative, of marking everybody relative to the first government at 70, means that the marks for a brilliant debate and for an abysmal one will be about the same.

This standard begs the question of what is a good average speech for this competition. Unfortunately the question is impossible to answer. We could not say, for example, that a good average speech was likely to come from the team from a particular country, because the standard of most teams varies considerably from year to year.

There is often a huge gap between teams at the top and bottom of the marking range. The competition attracts both highly skilled and experienced debaters at one end of the range, and novice debaters from non English speaking countries with no exposure to debate at the other.

It is theoretically possible that the overall standard one year is very high while in another year it is very low. This ought to be reflected in the marks for the whole competition. But it is not necessary for an individual judge's marks to average around 70 throughout the competition, although this is likely if the judge is judging teams from across the whole spectrum of abilities at the competition. If your marks are consistently coming in above or below 70, you might swap thoughts with your fellow judges to see if it is just you or whether you really have been judging a distinctly non-average group of teams.

The last word on this point is that nobody can enforce this particular part of the standard precisely. To achieve consistency in adjudication it is more important that the relative marks of judges on a panel should be about the same, even if the absolute marks vary to a small extent. Thus if I give three speakers 75, 78 and 73, and one of my fellow judges gives the same speakers 74, 79 and 71, we have clearly seen the debate the same way, even though our actual marks vary a little. Try to mark according to the hypothetical standard, but don't be too worried if you are a little bit different from your colleagues on this point.

6.2 Internal Marks and Reply Speeches

If we adopt an overall standard, we must have the same standard applied to each internal category of marks. Thus a good average speaker for this competition would be expected to score 28 for style, 28 for content and 14 for strategy (i.e., 70% of each category). A brilliant speaker would score 32 for style, 32 for content and 16 for strategy (i.e. 80% of each category). An appalling speaker would score 24 for style, 24 for content, and 12 for strategy (i.e. 60% of each category).

If we do not adopt these standards internally, the internal divisions become meaningless. If I decide that I will mark style on a range from 20 to 40, I am giving the same range of marks to this category as I would for the entire speech. In effect I am marking style out of 100 rather than out of 40.

This problem becomes particularly significant for strategy marks because strategy is worth only 20. There is a great temptation to expand the range for this category to differentiate between speakers of otherwise similar standards. It must be resisted: this category is worth only 20, and if 2 speakers are similar in standard they get the same mark, even if one is slightly better than the other.

The same problem arises in the reply speeches because all the categories are halved. The best way to deal with this problem is to mark the reply speech out of 100 and then halve all the marks. This allows half-marks, which ought to solve all your problems.

6.3 Who Wins the Debate

If you find yourself saying "I thought the proposition won the debate but when I added up my marks I found that the opposition had won instead," something is wrong. It might be your belief about who won the debate or it might be your marks: somehow the two things must be reconciled before you cast your vote. Look back over your marks to make sure that you were evaluating all speakers by the same standards and therefore that the marks accurately express your view of the relative performances of the speakers. Was the third opposition speaker really eight marks better than the first proposition speaker? Was there really no difference in the quality of style or content in the first four speeches? Also, make sure that your belief about who won the debate is not being unduly influenced by the last few speeches: all speeches count equally (except for the reply speeches, which count at half value) and the speaker marks help to ensure that this fact is reflected in your decision. Likewise, make sure that your belief is not being unduly influenced by one category in the marks: perhaps you think that the proposition won only because you are not giving full (i.e. 40%) weight in your mind to the fact that the opposition were significantly ahead on style or content. If your marks for each category and each speaker accurately reflect your view of the debate, then your total marks should reliably indicate which team won the debate, given the particular weightings of different categories we use at World Schools.

It is also worth noting the phenomenon called "the accelerating rebuttal mark". Some judges are swayed by rebuttal or clash. The more there is, the more they believe the speaker is doing a good job. This is logical until you realise that the government has one less opportunity to rebut the other side than the opposition does. The accelerating rebuttal mark means that opposition teams get a big advantage. Always be sure that you are giving full credit to the way a team has proposed an argument as well as to the way their opponents have attempted to knock it down.

6.4 Judicial Discussions

The practice in the World competition is for the judges to go outside after the debate to discuss the issues so that one can present a short commentary on behalf of the judges. It ought to go without saying that a judge cannot go outside to discuss the debate without having reached a decision. The easiest way to ensure this is to insist that each judge hand in their completed marksheet to the person chairing the debate before they go outside to discuss the result. Once handed in, it cannot be changed as a result of the discussions outside. If we did not insist on this rule, the debate outside the room would be more important than the one inside it!

6.5 The Adjudication Speech

Before the adjudication speech, but after ballots have been completed and handed to the chairperson, the judges have a brief opportunity to confer. This is not the time to try to persuade your fellow judges that they made a mistake on a particular issue or in their overall result. Their ballots are locked in like yours, and the only point of conferring is to help one of the judges give the adjudication speech. So, keep the discussion short and to the point. If you dissented and your views are quite different from the rest of the panel, briefly express your reasons and then stay out of the discussion.

The adjudication speech should explain the result of the debate to the audience. Teams can and should speak to the judges individually after the debate, but this is the only opportunity for the audience to hear the reason for the decision. The adjudication speech should not refer to mistakes made by individual speakers: you can discuss these privately after the debate instead of belittling a speaker in public.

Explaining the result to an audience that has just seen its first World Schools debate may require outlining the three categories in which we award marks and, where appropriate, identifying the category in which the decisive difference between the teams was to be found. The adjudication speech should not summarize the content of the debate except insofar as is truly necessary to explain the result. The speech should be as short as possible – typically between 2 and 4 minutes – while communicating to the audience a clear, explanation of the result of the debate (and expressing thanks to the hosts and sponsors).

When giving the adjudication speech you should remember that you are speaking for the panel, not just for yourself. Where there are importantly differing views, especially if the decision is not unanimous, you need to try as far as possible to explain how those differences came about. If at all possible, you should explain the grounds on which one or more judge dissented in a way that emphasizes the reasonableness of the disagreement, rather than leaving the audience to think that one judge got it wrong. In the unlikely and unfortunate event that you cannot present the dissenting view in a way that makes it sound reasonable, it is better to say nothing about it: just explain that the panel reached a majority verdict and then present the views of the majority.