

Leadership

Competition Rules Board January Meeting Minutes

Jan. 11, 2022

The NSDA Competition Rules Board members held their virtual meeting January 11, 2022. In attendance were President Pam Cady Wycoff, Vice President Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Byron Arthur, David Huston, Adam Jacobi, Jennifer Jerome, Renee Motter, and Jay Rye.

President Wycoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

COMPETITION RULES

College Competitor Eligibility

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Huston:

“Clarify the current eligibility rules and practices with the following language: ‘Students who compete for a post-secondary institution while they are in high school are ineligible to compete at the district and National Tournament.’”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

This rule is a clarification to current rules surrounding student eligibility for the district tournament series and the National Tournament. Students forfeit their eligibility for districts and Nationals if they compete for a college or post-secondary institution, even if they are also enrolled at a member high school.

National Tournament School Awards Points Allocation Adjustment

Moved by Rye, seconded by Jerome:

“Endorse the school award points allocation adjustment to account for the varying number of elimination rounds in the National Tournament based on entry totals in speech.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

The only change from the 2021 National Tournament school awards allocation formula is that octafinalists, quarterfinalists, and semifinalists in main speech events will receive five points for reaching each of those elimination rounds. Finalists will receive 15 points, and the top six competitors will receive an additional seven points. This is in contrast to 2021, where double-octafinalists, octafinalists, quarterfinalists, and semifinalists earned four points, finalists received 14 points, and the top six earned an additional six points. Because there will not be a double-octafinal round at the 2022 National Tournament due to lower entry numbers, the points allocated to the double-octafinal in speech from 2021 were reallocated to the other elimination rounds for 2022. This ensures that a student in debate, speech, and Congress can each earn a maximum of 22 points for competition in that event.

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Judge Training at the National Tournament

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Huston:

“Endorse implementation of phase one judge training for National Tournament adjudicators.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

Phase one includes a requirement that all National Tournament judges complete the NFHS/NSDA Cultural Competence course in order to judge at the 2022 National Tournament. Judges must certify in Tabroom.com that they have completed the course, and a badge will be added to their public judging profile. Additional badging will be available for optional judge training courses, such as the Building Supportive Cultures course. World Schools Debate judges will attend an in-person judge training before the 2022 National Tournament. Phase two of judge training efforts will be focused on creating judge training specific to event categories.

State Constraints in National Tournament Final Rounds

Moved by Huston, seconded by Jerome:

“Accept the preferential vote results regarding state constraints for judging final rounds at the National Tournament beginning in 2022.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

After reviewing and assessing feedback from a working group of diverse stakeholders and coach representatives, the Competition Rules Board conducted a preferential vote based on the level to which state constraints should limit final round judge paneling. At the 2022 National Tournament, judges will be permitted to adjudicate students from their state in the final round. However, judges will continue to be prohibited from adjudicating students from their district in finals. State constraints will remain in place through semifinals. If assigned, judges who feel they are unable to remain impartial judging a competitor from their state will be asked to recuse themselves from the judging panel. In 2021, the Competition Rules Board set goals for experience and representation standards on final round panels, and removing state constraints from final rounds allows us to create more diverse and experienced panels to meet these goals. This change will be assessed following the 2022 National Tournament. Read more about final round goals at www.speechanddebate.org/national-tournament-paneling-goals.

Preset, Randomized Recency in Congressional Debate

Moved by Motter, seconded by Jacobi:

“Preset, randomized recency will be used in every round of Congressional Debate at the National Tournament beginning in 2022. All district tournaments must use preset, randomized recency in Congressional Debate beginning in 2022-2023.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

As used at the National Tournament in 2020 and 2021, Tabroom.com will produce a random number for each competitor in the chamber prior to the round. The presiding officer uses these recency numbers to determine who speaks in what order. The goal of continuing the use of preset recency is to minimize the impact of potentially exclusive pre-round discussions and implicit bias in speaker order selection. The NSDA is committed to working with leadership to ensure that competitors in a chamber receive equal opportunities to speak in each round.

Written Feedback on National Tournament Ballots

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rye:

“All judges at the 2022 National Tournament are required to write feedback on ballots.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

At the 2022 National Tournament, judges in all main events and supplemental events will be required to leave written feedback on their ballots. Meaningful written feedback allows coaches and competitors to understand why they received the decision or ranks they did and is essential to growth in speech and debate activities and beyond. We will continue to create and improve educational materials to educate adjudicators on how to provide constructive, culturally appropriate feedback, and we will assess this new requirement following the 2022 National Tournament.

Adjust Public Forum Topic Cycles

The Competition Rules Board considered a member-submitted proposal to adjust Public Forum topic cycles to the following: September topic, October-November topic, December-January topic, February topic, March topic, April topic, Nationals topic. After discussion, there was insufficient support from the Competition Rules Board to vote on this proposal.

Online End-of-Year Event

The Competition Rules Board discussed the merits of potentially hosting an online, end-of-year competition in 2023. Pros and cons of this concept were discussed; however, no action was taken at this time. Discussions will continue once additional feedback is secured.

Honor Code Board Sub-Committee

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Motter:

“Establish a sub-committee of Board members to bring recommendations to the full Board of Directors regarding enforcement of the NSDA Honor Code policies and procedures.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

The organization's bylaws state that the Board shall establish procedures for removal or disciplinary actions of member schools or individual members who violate the Honor Code. A sub-committee of Board members will work to create those procedures for review and approval by the full Board. Committee work is scheduled to begin in 2022.

Membership Correspondence

In accordance with our goal of increased membership engagement, any letters submitted to the Competition Rules Board prior to the meeting were included in meeting materials to inform the Board of ideas, requests, and concerns. This correspondence was considered during the Board's decision-making process. Thank you to the individuals who took the time to share their feedback.

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Jacobi:

“Adjourn.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Tuesday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

We want to hear from you! Send your feedback to board@speechanddebate.org.