

Leadership

Competition Rules Board November Meeting Minutes

Nov. 8, 2022

The NSDA Competition Rules Board members held their virtual meeting November 8, 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 6:05 p.m.

COMPETITION RULES

Chair Use in Storytelling

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rye:

“Remove this item from the table.”

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

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Jerome:

“Clarify that in Storytelling, students may choose the original position of the chair. Use of the chair is not considered a prop as long as: 1) Once the performance begins, all legs of the chair remain stationary on the ground and do not move from their original position, and 2) Competitors do not kneel or stand on the chair.”

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

The Competition Rules Board of Directors continued their discussion from the September meeting about the latitude of use permissible for a chair within the Storytelling rules. The current rules state that a competitor may deliver the story while seated, but the story must be retold without props. In practice, competitors often use the chair in Storytelling to help them tell the story, and it is difficult to know when use of the chair is considered a prop and therefore

prohibited. This new language clarifies how the chair may be used. It seeks to leave room for creativity in performances while preventing potential safety concerns.

Auto-Qualification in World Schools and Big Questions

Moved by Huston, seconded by Arthur:

“Beginning in 2023, expand National Tournament auto-qualification eligibility to the top 16 entries in Big Questions and World Schools Debate.”

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

In the current rules, the top four entries in Big Questions and top eight entries in World Schools are eligible for auto-qualification to the following year’s National Tournament. A minimum of three students on an auto-qualified World Schools team must be freshmen, sophomores, or juniors to be eligible, and no new members may be added to an auto-qualified team. This change expands auto-qualification eligibility to the top 16 entries in World Schools and Big Questions to create parity with other main events at the National Tournament. Big Questions and World Schools have an elimination round cut off at 16 entries due to their traditional tournament bracket.

National Tournament 2026 Bid Review and Feedback

The Executive Director shared findings from a recent site visit to Richmond, Virginia. The Competition Rules Board began a preliminary discussion about the viability of Richmond as a future National Tournament site. Discussion will continue at the next full Board meeting.

Strategic Planning

The Director of Competition and Events shared an update on progress related to competition rules strategic plan objectives. This update described ongoing work, development and assessment regarding judge accreditation, National Tournament judge obligations, the Last-Chance Qualifier and supplemental event opportunities for non-National Tournament qualifiers, free online competition through the Springboard Series, and updates to Tabroom.com. The Competition Rules Board reviewed, analyzed, and shared feedback regarding progress on these objectives.

Digital Speech & Debate e-Championship

Moved by Motter, seconded by Jerome:

“Endorse the proposal to host a Digital Speech & Debate e-Championship.”

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

The Digital Speech & Debate e-Championship is a collaborative venture between the Tournament of Champions and National Speech & Debate Association to provide an accessible, cost-effective e-championship opportunity for students in grades 6-12. The online tournament will be held May 6-8, 2023. The Digital Speech & Debate e-Championship is presented by the TOC and NSDA with support from the NAUDL, NCFL, NIETOC, and NFHS. More information can be found online at echampionship.tabroom.com.


Equity Pause

The Competition Rules Board used the [NSDA Equity Lens](#) to reflect on the nature of their meeting deliberations and whether their decisions and decision-making processes are transparent, accountable, and reflect the organization’s core value of equity.

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Huston:

“Adjourn.”

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m. Tuesday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

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