

Leadership

Competition Rules Board September Meeting Minutes

Sept. 12, 2023

The NSDA Competition Rules Board members held their virtual meeting September 12, 2023. In attendance were President Pam Cady Wycoff, Vice President Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., 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

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 during the Board's decision-making process. The Board welcomes membership feedback.

Supplemental Event Restructuring

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Motter:

"The National Tournament will allow for supplemental debate and supplemental speech entries to be split into two groupings. Competition will be held separately through elimination rounds at their respective building(s). In speech, the final round in each event will be composed of the top three speech competitors from each group. In Extemp Debate, the final round will be composed of the top competitor from each group."

Passed: 7-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

Prior to 2020, around 65% of pre-registered supplemental event entries re-registered and competed on Wednesday of the National Tournament. In the last two years, re-

registration rates have been higher than 80% in several events. This is due to both increases in the number of national qualifiers who pre-register for supplemental events and because of the addition of students who can come to the tournament in supplemental events only. Large entry numbers have made it difficult to fit all supplemental speech entries into one building and all Extemp Debate entries into one building. This also impacts the development of reasonable schedules for competition and, in turn, the logistics of transportation and supervision needed to create a positive Nationals experience for students, judges, and volunteers.

This new rule allows for pre-registered Extemp Debate entries to be split into two different groupings in late May after registration closes. The groups will each compete at separate buildings, and Group A entries will only compete against other Group A entries in preliminary and elimination rounds until the final round. Coaches will find out which grouping/building their pre-registered entries would compete at in late May. Each building will have a top debater from that group; the top debater from each building will compete against one another in the final round to determine the national champion.

Similarly, this new rule allows for pre-registered supplemental speech entries in each event to be split into two different groupings in late May after registration closes. All seven supplemental speech events would be offered at Building A and Building B. Entries competing in Building A will only compete against other Building A entries in preliminary and elimination rounds. A final round will be held in each building to determine the top three competitors in each group. The top three competitors from Building A and the top three competitors from Building B will compete together in the final rounds to determine the national champions.

The grouping of entries will be done randomly based on geography with the following guidelines:

1. The number of pre-registered entries in each group will be roughly equal.
2. All pre-registered Extemp Debate entries from a district will be placed in the same group—e.g., all Western Slope Extemp Debate entries will be in the same group.
3. The split will be the same for all supplemental speech events; all supplemental speech entries from a district will compete at the same building in the same group.
4. States with 4+ districts will have half of their districts placed in Building A and half of their districts placed in Building B.
5. We will strive for geographic diversity within the two groups while balancing the need for numbers to be close to equal in both.

Based on our preliminary planning, we do expect to use this model at the 2024 National Tournament to ensure that competitors have adequate space and a reasonable schedule for competition. This split allows us to guarantee that all of a district's supplemental speech entries will compete in one building and all of a district's Extemp Debate entries will compete in one building to avoid adding additional stops to a school's transportation loop at the National Tournament. This also allows us to better target judging so there is a greater likelihood that judges will be at a building with competitors from their school if they are judging supplemental events.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Moved by Huston, seconded by Rye:

“In events in which speeches must be the original created work of a competitor (OO, INF, IX, USX, SW, EXC, IMP), students are prohibited from quoting or paraphrasing text directly from generative AI sources. Generative AI should not be cited as a source. The exception is that a student delivering a speech about the topic of AI may quote AI to illustrate their points about AI, in accordance with existing quoted word limits. While generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and sources, the original source of any quoted or paraphrased evidence must be available if requested.

In debate events, generative AI should not be cited as a source; while generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and sources, the original

source of any quoted or paraphrased evidence must be available if requested.

In Interpretation events, students are prohibited from performing material created by generative AI sources. Generative AI should not be used as a source of material; while generative AI may be used to guide students to articles, ideas, and material, the original source of any material that is performed must be available if requested.”

Passed: 7-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

The Competition Rules Board assessed their ruling from March 2023 that was used at the National Tournament. There are two additions to the March ruling regarding how generative artificial intelligence may be used by speech and debate competitors:

1. An exception was added to allow students who are writing an Original Oratory or Informative, for example, about artificial intelligence to quote artificial intelligence to demonstrate their argument.
2. Clarification that Interpretation scripts may not include source material created by generative artificial intelligence.

The topic of generative artificial intelligence and its impact on our activity is an evolving issue, and discussions on the subject will be ongoing.

Strategic Plan 2022-2023 Q4 Progress

The Director of Competition and Events shared an update on progress related to the 2022-2023 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 and shared feedback regarding progress on these objectives.

Competition Rules Leadership Committee

Town hall meetings were held in August regarding changes to the composition of the NSDA Board of Directors and the creation of a new standing committee focused on competition rules and interscholastic programming. Feedback gathered from the town halls on the subject was shared for discussion by the Competition Rules Board.

Internet in Extemporaneous Debate

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Lindsey:

“Allow use of the internet in Extemporaneous Debate per the New Guidelines for Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate.”

Passed: 7-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rye)

This ruling applies the same internet rules used in Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas, Policy, and Big Questions to Extemporaneous Debate to create clarity and continuity across debate events. While use of the internet was already permitted during the preparation period in Extemp Debate, this rule allows debaters to access the internet during the competition round itself as well.

Randomized Recency in Congressional Debate

District tournaments are required to use randomized, preset recency in Congressional Debate. Computer software like Tabroom.com will generate a number for each competitor in the chamber prior to each round. Tabroom.com already attempts to prevent one student from receiving similar recency numbers in multiple rounds in one tournament, though the technology


is imperfect! Tournament staff are encouraged to review the recency numbers assigned to each student and make adjustments if students received the same or similar recency numbers in multiple rounds. For example, a student assigned a recency number of 1 and 2 in both preliminary rounds might have their second recency number adjusted to put them in the bottom half of speakers.

Rule Change Submission Form Review

The Competition Rules Board reviewed rule change submissions that had not yet been addressed to date. The Board prioritized the remaining submissions and determined the timeline for discussion and resolution.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Tuesday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

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