

CTAM 2009

Best Practices of HS Speech Tournaments

Session II

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Items discussed among the many in attendance:

1. Third Round Draw

- Most commented they DID offer a third-round draw
- Upholds the intent/integrity of the events
- Those who don't gave the following reasons: newer/novice students, time efficiency, junior high tournaments
- Interesting option: no FIRST round draw, just have students show up with one prepared to save time (especially good for after school tournaments)

2. Critique Return

- Both pros/cons were discussed and coaches shared what they choose and why
- Pros (to returning individual critiques after each round): fewer papers to stuff into team packets, students enjoy the immediate gratification of comments
- Cons: judges may feel rushed, judges may not be as honest or thorough, judges might want to use critiques to reflect while determining scores, students might make unnecessary changes, students might get upset at something they read, coaches may never see critiques
- Generally, people were in favor of having judges turn critiques in with ballots, as the cons of returning them after each round were many. Each invitational host will continue to make his/her own choices, but a shift has definitely occurred in this area.

3. Ballot pick-up and drop-off

- Some schools have switched from giving judges all three of their judging ballots at the beginning of the day to having them pick each one up between rounds.
- Benefits of this change include: knowing if a round is without a judge, no judges losing ballots or using the wrong ones, fewer judges shuffling and switching rounds causing confusion
- Logistics include giving the judge their assignments in the morning, but not their ballots; each judge would come to ballot table to pick up ballot before first round; then pick up next round's ballot when turning in last round's ballot. Easy.
- This also brought up site-scheduling as a positive practice of speech tournaments; coaches spoke on how easy it was and how efficient to deal with drops.

4. Green tournaments

- Schedules posted at various locations
- Maps posted with schedules OR a map return box for use the following year
- Half sheet critique sheets
- Post finals on regular paper with other schedules OR laminate big paper for re-use with dry erase markers each year OR post with powerpoint OR broadcast over televisions in the schools if available
- Reuse old trophies or use creative useful trophies

- No judges' folders; just staple OR just have a master judge schedule posted
 - WATER BOTTLE USE: encourage all students to have a reusable water bottle to bring to all tournaments
5. Finals
- Coaches discussed the practice of novice finals and honors finals
 - Novice finals that produce finalists who went 5,5,5 could switch to doing a "top novice" award
 - Honors finals came about as a way to honor more kids as tournaments grew so huge; generally, people like this practice
6. Etiquette
- In the last 5 minutes we discussed 2 points of etiquette: dress and applause
 - Dress: some schools allow their students to change clothes before the award ceremony; coaches shared why they thought it was disrespectful; coaches whose schools practice this noted it is not done out of disrespect, but out of time concern (long drives require comfy clothes)
 - Applause: coaches discussed the disrespect of cheering for 1st place after 2nd place is announced; this is an individual coaching responsibility and everyone should make sure their students stay respectful

****WITH ALL TOURNAMENT PRACTICES, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO LET YOUR ATTENDEES KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE THEY GET THERE. ****