



AZ SPEECH & DEBATE COACHES ASSOCIATION

JUDGES HANDBOOK



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Contact Us

(480) 903-4059 | asdca@azspeechanddebate.org



10 Steps of Judging

I. Set-Up a Tabroom.com Account

Tabroom is the main portal used to run speech and debate tournaments. It's how you get registered to judge, where you'll get notification of the competition rounds you've been assigned, and where you'll fill out the ballot.

1. Go to Tabroom.com
2. Click "Sign-Up" in the Upper Righthand Corner



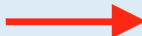
3. Fill in your Information* & Click "Create Account"

*Please ensure you enter your phone number, as that is required in AZ tournaments

Non-NSDA Members

If you do not have an NSDA account, create a new Tabroom account

* Email Address	<input type="text" value="asdca@azspeechanddebate.org"/>
* First Name	<input type="text" value="Jim"/>
Middle Name	<input type="text" value="Danger"/>
* Last Name	<input type="text" value="Welty"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text" value="(480) 903-4059"/>
State	<input type="text" value="N/A - None"/>
Country	<input type="text" value="United States"/>
Time Zone	<input type="text" value="Phoenix - MST"/>
* Password	<input type="password" value="....."/> Strength <input type="range"/>
* Repeat Password	<input type="password" value="....."/>

 [Create Account](#)

4. Let your Coach Know your Tabroom Email, and then you're all set!

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II. Check the Schedule & Pack Your Laptop

- Your coach will send you the schedule, your judging assignment, and the tournament address. The timeframes for competition are dependent on both the tournament and your judging category. So to answer the “when” and “where” of judging, please talk to your coach.
- Make sure you pack a laptop and charger

III. Arrive On-Site 30 Minutes Before Your First Round

High School and College campuses take time to navigate, and it will take you a bit of time to get situated. Early arrival is also a guarantee that you don't miss a ballot.

IV. Check to See if You Have a Ballot

Within 15 Minutes before the round, ballots will be assigned. Check your ballot by logging into Tabroom.com and **clicking your email in the upper right hand corner.**

Please note that you should consistently check Tabroom and refresh consistently within the 15 minutes prior to a round. If one judge doesn't pick up, we do need to swap it to someone else.

The judges lounge is also a great place to go if you are unsure if you have a ballot, or just to ensure you don't have one. Judges' lounge location will depend on the tournament, so feel free to ask your coach.



V. Press Start (Or Accept) Right When you See Your Ballot

Press the green button labeled “Start Ballot” (it is also sometimes labeled “Accept Ballot”). You should do this as soon as you see it, because it lets the coaches running the tournament know you are ready to judge the round.



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Because judges picking up ballots and starting rounds on time is so critical to the timeliness of a tournament, we will also text you if the ballot is not getting picked up to notify you.

VI. Go to Your Competition Room

The competition room will be right on the ballot, both in the initial interface after clicking your email and on the ballot itself.

Round	Rooms	Starts	Entries	
LD Round 1	1002	Fri 3:30 PM MT	AFF Nick Leonardi NEG Daniel Waks	START ROUND

VII. Start the Round

- A. Students will generally know what to do from here, but it will range depending on the event:
 1. Debate: The debate has a specific order, so the students will proceed through it.
 2. Speech: 5-7 speakers will perform in the order on your ballot, unless they have another event to go to (called being, “Double Entered”).
 3. Congress: Students will elect a Presiding Officer and introduce pieces of legislation, offering affirmative and negative speeches on each.

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VIII. Offer Students Written Feedback

Do...

- Write detailed comments assessing both content and delivery
- Explain the reasoning for your decisions
- Write a combination of compliments and critiques for every student
- Remember that it's an educational activity, so ensure every comment is constructive.

Don't...

- Comment on student attire
- Say that the student did nothing wrong, it was just a tough round
- Use “absolute language” (ex: “This doesn’t work”)
- Say that the students topic or argument doesn’t matter
- Submit details simply about the student’s speech, without actually offering compliments or critiques.

Sample Speech Comments

Sample Speech Reason for Decision (or RFD) for Informative Speaking

Thanks for making it out to the NSDA National Qualifier! In this round, I judged you by the following paradigm in rank order of significance:

1. Presence of structure couched in the significance and relevance of the topic
2. Clearly defined topic scope
3. Analysis that continually punctuates the urgency of the argument
4. Engaging visuals to showcase significant details within the speech
5. Conversational, poised, and confident delivery

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Sample Speech Ballot (Informative Speaking)

Delivery

- Make sure you're projecting your voice, especially during the beginning of the speech where you're trying to really grab our attention. I lost a few words in the first couple of lines as well, so that's another reason you may need to improve on volume.
- Love the jokes in the intro and first point, really well written and timed!
- Work a bit more on physical control. Right now, a lot of your gestures are reading as non-committal, and you're swaying throughout the speech. Working on holding yourself a bit more still will likely serve the delivery of the speech well, as physical control is one of the main ways an audience tends to judge confidence and poise.

Content

- What a cool topic! Love the focus on metacognition, and I appreciate the ambition behind such a complex topic.
- That introduction was pretty long, and perhaps not in a way that served the speech well. The attention getter up top kind of dominated the first minute and a half of the speech, meaning that by the time we get out of the intro, we hardly have a clear topic definition. I would advise a more robust structure that helps make the relevance and significance of the topic clear early on.

Time: 9:42

Sample Debate Comments

Sample Debate Reason for Decision (RFD) for Public Forum Debate

Overall, this was a close round, but I ended up choosing the Negative team. Aff wasn't able to cover nearly as much ground, especially because of a second summary that left a lot of arguments without responses on both sides. As a result, I end up weighing Aff's Climate Change argument against Neg's Nuclear Deterrent, and because the deterrent claims flow through largely clean at the end of the round, I vote Neg.

Feedback for the Affirmative Team

Constructive

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- Overall, really solid constructive. Your Contention 1 on Climate Change is well linked and the impact is pretty believable, especially given how well it feeds into the resolution. Just be sure to rehearse it a bit more before you go up there. The delivery was a bit stumbly and difficult to parse out.

Rebuttal

- Really solid coverage overall, but I feel like you had some clear missed opportunities on your opponents Contention 2. Addressing their missing links really would have served your side well, and I would caution you to not always read your opponents impacts as being certain, especially for something as vast as nuclear annihilation.

Summary

- This speech really needed a more robust organizational structure. Because of how much you were jumping around, you missed covering important offense and defense in the debate, and this is ultimately where the win/loss balance shifted against you.

Feedback for the Negative Team

Constructive

- Your first contention on infectious disease is solid, but your contention two on Nuclear War just doesn't make sense. Where's the link into the resolution? How do we get to the impact of nuclear annihilation from the Affs resolutional burden? These questions really need to be answered to fill in clear logical gaps in your contention here.

Rebuttal

- Solid coverage of your opponent's case here, just watch out for diction. I missed a ton of words by not hearing consonance clearly.

Summary

- Really effective work calling out arguments your opponent dropped and making them matter in the round. Great organizational structure here too.

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IX. Offer a Round Decision

This, again, ranges depending on the event. But for each event type:

- **Debate:** Judges offer each team/student a win or loss, along with giving them speaker points (usually in the 27-30 range)*
 - *The ballot gives you the opportunity to mark a “Low Point Win” this is where the winning debater/team receives fewer speaker points than their opponents. This should typically be reserved for when you believe they are the better debater, but lost the round regardless.
- **Speech:** Judges rank students in order of best to worst performance (1 being the best, 6 being the worst)
- **Congress:** Judges rank students 1-9 (1 being the best, 9 being the worst)

Outside of Congress 9's, there can be no duplicate ranks or ties.

X. Submit & Confirm Your Ballot

- Once you press submit at the bottom of your ballot, it will ask you to confirm your decision.
- Until you hit “Confirm” the ballot doesn't actually get submitted, so make sure you do so before closing your laptop and leaving the room.
- Ballot submissions are usually due **within 5 minutes of the last speech**, so please be sure to start writing comments and making decisions while there are speeches being given in front of you, rather than waiting until after.
- Comments can also generally be edited for AZ local tournaments until Sunday afternoon following the competition. So ensure you submit the round outcome quickly, and then feel free to polish comments later.

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Conduct Requirements

Interactions with Competitors

It's important to remember: Competitors worked hard to get here, they are likely nervous, and they are minors. All three of these factors are important in dictating your conduct, so you are required to:

- Be kind and respectful to competitors
- Allow competitors to perform free from interruption
- Refrain from sharing your personal contact information (if you need a file shared with you, please use the Tabroom file sharing feature enabled by the tournament)
- Refrain from physically touching competitors
- Refrain from written comments about student attire or appearance
- Refrain from inappropriate gestures or language

Any violation of these procedures may result in your immediate expulsion from the tournament, as well as consequences for the team you represent.

Interactions with Fellow Adults

In addition to competitors, there are also coaches, judges, and observing parents/family members at tournaments. All of these parties are also here for a reason, so you are required to:

- Treat fellow adults with kindness and respect
- Refrain from discussions of your round decisions
- Refrain from the harassment of tournament staff, which includes:
 - Asking the same question repeatedly to tournament staff
 - Shouting at tournament staff
 - Speaking rudely or inappropriately to tournament staff
 - Ignoring instructions from tournament staff
 - Walking into the Tabroom without your coach present

Any violation of these procedures may result in your immediate expulsion from the tournament, as well as consequences for the team you represent.

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FAQs

How do I get in contact with the tournament officials?

Use our text-only line at (480) 903-4059 or email asdca@azspeechanddebate.org. We're happy to help you from there!

How long do I wait for a competitor to show up to a round?

For debate events, opponents forfeit the first round by not showing up within 15 minutes. For later rounds, please contact tournament officials if the competitor is not there within 15 minutes.

For speech, the standard wait time is 75 minutes from the round start time. If the competitor has not shown up by that time, please contact tournament officials from there.

Under any circumstances, please contact tournament officials when a competitor is not present in a round after the designated time frames above.

If I think a competitor violated the rules, what should I do?

Contact the tournament officials, and we will adjudicate the issue from there!

Can I go home yet?

The tournament will make a general announcement via text when all ballots are out for the last round in your event, so hold tight until you receive that.

If you think your coach registered you for a partial obligation (part of the day, but not the full day) be sure to ask them directly, as they would know.

Can I offer verbal feedback to students?

Please refrain from verbal feedback at tournaments. It runs the tournament behind, can negatively affect student mindset in competition, and may be regarded as inappropriate by the student or their coach.

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I didn't receive a ballot for this round, can I leave?

Unfortunately, no. However, you should take a break, go to the judges lounge to grab a bite to eat, and get some work done. If you would like to head off-campus for a short period of time to grab food, please ask the tournament officials in the judges lounge or judges table.

What if I just don't show up to my round?

The effect of such an action is felt broadly. The tournament runs behind, competitors are late to future rounds, and we all go home later. Please show up to rounds on time, so that way the tournament runs smoothly.

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