Catholic Schools Debating Association

Adjudicator’s Handbook 2009
The Catholic Schools Debating Association operates under the auspices of the Association of Catholic School Principals. It aims to provide opportunities for students in Catholic Secondary Schools to participate in Debating and Public Speaking competitions.

Students benefit in a number of ways:
- Learning to articulate their ideas.
- Learning to think logically.
- Learning to work as part of a team.
- Developing self-confidence

We would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the members of the CSDA, to thank the Principals who serve on the CSDA Committee. Their support to our association is both invaluable and very much appreciated. Another group of people who deserve our thanks is our adjudicators. Without the voluntary donation of your time and skill, this association could not function.
INTRODUCTION
A debate is a formal conflict between two teams. In this competition, each team consists of THREE speakers. Debating is about ARGUMENT, so the team which is more effective in its argument wins the debate.

As an adjudicator, you have to decide who wins the argument. There are THREE major factors which need to be considered.

MATTER - WHAT the speaker says. The team’s case including the major arguments, definition and refutation
MANNER – HOW the speakers present their case. Do they read the whole speech or do they try to talk to the audience? Can they think on their feet? Are they confident?
METHOD – The WAY the speaker presents her/his case. Does each speaker complete her/his role? Does the team work together through the debate?

TO HELP YOU, THE ADJUDICATOR measure the effectiveness of each argument, each of these factors could be thought of as a ratio to give an indication of relative merit.

MATTER = 40 : MANNER = 40 : METHOD = 20

This ratio is a guideline to help you in reaching your decision. This ratio should never be turned into marks and used as a reason for making a decision. The decision about the winner of a debate must be made with relation to Matter, Manner and Method.

In CSDA debating, it is not the practice to use marks.

TOPIC AREA 2009
It is important to note that students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 are given a topic area within which to debate. They will be given a topic area in all rounds including the Elimination and Finals Rounds. It was decided by majority at the General Meeting in November 2005, that the topics set for debate are to fall clearly within that topic area. Therefore the debate needs to be structured within that topic area.

In 2009 there will be no topic area for Years 11 and 12 (S2 and S1 teams). This will be trialled for a second year and reviewed again.
JUDGING MATTER

The factors which should be taken into account when judging matter are:

**DEFINITION**
It is important that teams establish a clear definition early in their argument, so that both teams are debating on common ground. The responsibility for definition rests with the first speakers on both teams. In general, the Affirmative have the right to set the definition. The first speaker needs to justify the definition. If the definition is reasonable, the Negative should accept the Affirmative’s definition. However, the Negative can amend the definition if they are able to show why the definition presented by the Affirmative is unreasonable or flawed.

Many younger teams and even some senior teams see definition as something to skim over. They do not realise that it is of vital importance. Problems often arise in debates where inappropriate attention has been given to definition because the two teams are not sure of the grounds on which they are arguing.

Good teams will define key terms and take into account their context in the topic. Word for word dictionary definitions serve little purpose.

As an adjudicator you should write down the verbatim definitions given by both teams.

**TEAM LINE**
Rather than just presenting a series of examples, a good team will have a general theme or argument which creates a link between their examples. This general theme is referred to as the TEAM LINE. The team line should show the logic of the team’s argument. The examples used should relate to and expand the team line presented. Adjudicators should write down the team line.

The team line often follows the word because. e.g. –That the book is better than the film because...........................(here would come the team line)

**EXAMPLES**
The examples which teams use will play a large role in determining how you judge their matter. Effective examples will be factual and able to be verified. Teams should avoid using hypothetical or personal examples. As an adjudicator you are not expected to be an expert in every field, and as such you must not let your own specialist knowledge prejudice your judgement of a team’s matter. If a team presents a point that is factually incorrect then that point must stand until it is refuted by the other team.

**REFUTATION**
Argument is essential to debating. Thus refutation is of critical importance. Good teams will refute their opponent’s team line as well as individual examples. Watch for teams that refute trivialities rather than the substance of an argument. eg.,

Aff: In 1938 when Germany invaded Poland we saw...
Neg: We want to refute the Affirmative. Germany invaded Poland in 1939.

Team members should refute arguments. They should never launch into a personal attack against members of the other team.
JUDGING MANNER

You are making an assessment of the way in which speakers present their arguments. A good speaker should establish a rapport with the audience. They will address the audience rather than the opposing team.

When judging manner you need to consider and assess areas like:

- effective eye contact
- unobtrusive use of notes
- appropriate use of language
- clear and varied use of voice
- gestures which assist in conveying a message

Do they read the whole speech or do they try to talk to the audience? Can they think on their feet? Are they confident?

MATTER VS MANNER

When judging a debate you need to take care not to let impressive manner sway your decision without giving due consideration to matter. Ultimately, Debating is about argument and debates should be awarded to the team which wins the argument. It may be possible that one team has presented an excellent argument but are weak in manner. The other team may have brilliant manner but say virtually nothing in terms of their argument. In this case the debate should be awarded to the team with the better and more logical argument. Awarding debates on better manner should be a last resort, used only when all aspects of the argument of both teams is equal.

JUDGING METHOD

METHOD refers to the logic of the argument presented by both teams. It concerns individual speakers and the entire team. With respect to individual speakers you need to consider the logical development of each speech.

- Does the speaker develop each point fully and relate to the team line, before moving to the next? Or, does the speaker jump from point to point?

ALLOCATION OF ARGUMENTS

A debate will follow a logical line if the first speaker allocates the area each speaker is going to talk to. As an adjudicator you need to note whether this has been done or not.

TEAM CONSISTENCY

Listen to ensure each member follows a consistent line of argument, that the team line remains constant. The line of argument of the third speaker should be the same as outlined by the first speaker.

TIMING

UNDERTIME A team which speaks substantially undertime is really penalising itself, as it will not be able to present as much matter as a team that utilises its time. Thus be careful not to double penalise a team for the one error. Nevertheless, it also needs to be remembered that a team which speaks undertime is depriving the opposition of matter to refute.

OVERTIME A team which speaks substantially overtime needs to be penalised as this is the equivalent of cheating as it allows them to present more matter. Overtime is usually the result of poor organisation. Don’t stop listening or writing notes. During the overtime period, matter will be presented which the other team will listen to and may refute. If you are going to judge this refutation you need to have listened to the points made. You cannot, however, award the team marks for the matter that was presented in the overtime period.

Ultimately you should be able to find more substantial reasons than timing for awarding a decision.
A most important area that is considered under METHOD is how well each speaker fulfills her/his duties. These duties are as follows:

**DUTIES OF SPEAKERS**

**First Affirmative:**
1. identifies the issue
2. presents definition,
3. justification of definition
4. presentation and development of team line,
5. team allocation,
6. arguments.

Techniques that can be used in the practical implementation of arguments:

‘Measure of argument’: Topic – *That there is too much sponsorship in sport.*
- Example: To prove how much is too much, the detrimental effects caused by the amount of money in sport need to be included.

‘Technique to assist proof’: Topic – *That private cars should be banned from the CBD.*
- Example: To prove that the CBD would be better without private cars, a scenario is created to further support why this line of argument is the better one i.e. showing the different ways in which the CBD would be better and suggesting possible ways by which such a scheme could be implemented.

Adjudicators need to be aware that some of the CSDA teams compete in other competitions and some do not. In other competitions, the above technique is often referred to as a “model”. The technique can be used whether it is called a model or not. It is not an essential technique for winning a debate. It is just another technique and as such needs to be understood and be available for students to use if they wish.

‘PREP’: Make your POINT – Give a REASON – Supply an EXAMPLE – Restate your POINT

**First Negative:**
1. identifies the issue
2. must either accept or amend affirmative’s definition with justification
3. refutation
4. team line
5. team allocation
6. arguments

Here are some important considerations for refutation:

- Refutation is providing a counter argument that “destroys” the initial argument presented by a team.
- It must be accompanied by a reason and/or example. It cannot simply be: “They said that there are no penguins in Antarctica, but they are wrong”….WHY? HOW?
If this team has prepared a totally different definition and line of argument……..What could they do?....

If they are brave and confident (you would find this more as students are older) the first negative may say……….— Our team firmly believes that our definition and line of argument is the more reasonable one BUT ‘EVEN IF’ we were to take up the affirmative’s definition and argument it is still wrong BECAUSE…………………. If they do this or try to do this they must try to provide adequate details to support this attempt. It is a brave step and deserves rewarding.

Second Affirmative:
1. deals with definitional issues
2. presents refutation
3. argues the case recapturing the initiative.

Second Negative:
1. deals with definitional issues
2. presents refutation
3. argues the case recapturing the initiative.

Third Affirmative:
1. presents refutation (bulk of speech even to the 1st bell)
2. summarises own case
3. contrasts it with other team’s case.
4. SHOULD NOT INTRODUCE NEW MATERIAL.

Third Negative:
1. as for Third Affirmative except…………
2. new material MUST NOT be introduced.

THE FINAL DECISION

In the final analysis, while the decision you make is important, to the students the reasons you have for reaching that decision is vitally important. Students will be able to accept losing if they are made aware why they have lost. The result cannot be a draw.

1. You should award the result on a significant aspect of the art of debating.
2. Because a debate should be a conflict or argument it is reasonable to award victory to the team which has won the conflict, unless there are good reasons for not doing so.
3. Debating must be a team effort. NO award should be given on the merits of any one speaker e.g. a brilliant 3rd speaker. Remember also, that debaters are speakers, not readers.
4. The decision must not be based on whether a team uses or does not use any one technique.

DELIVERING THE ADJUDICATION

- Be Encouraging.
- Start with something positive about each team.
- Do not speak for longer than the time limit allocated to each speaker.
- Suggest a way that debaters may improve their debating skills.
- NEVER BELITTLE or dismiss their efforts.
- GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR DECISION.
- DO NOT speak about individual speakers when presenting your decision.
- It is preferable if you SPEAK PRIVATELY to individuals afterwards.
- If you are confronted by aggressive students, parents or teachers, insist that you all adjourn to the supper room (you can tell them that this is school policy) and seek out the Debating Coordinator of the host school to back up the fact that the adjudicator’s decision is final.
- The CSDA has guidelines for grievance procedures available in the “Rules for the Metropolitan Debating
Competition", section 13.