Adjudicator Manual SA Nationals 2011

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Introduction:

This manual’s purpose is to provide clarity into something that is not quite as mystical as people would have you believe: the art of adjudicating. In this manual we highlight various considerations to make when scoring as well as when ranking teams in a debate. This guide has been made with reference to the standards employed at the World University Debating Championships. We feel it is only proper that we begin forcing ourselves to compete at the same level as one would at WUDC. We are all more than capable of engaging at the highest intellectual levels of argumentation. Let’s make sure that SA Nationals 2011 is about pushing ourselves and establishing a culture of concentrated debating excellence in Southern Africa.

The CA team for this tournament:

- Debby Nixon (CA- Tuks)
- Afika Nqeto (DCA- Rhodes)
- Kimera Chetty (DCA- UKZN)
- Joe Roussos (DCA- Wits)
- Rhydian Morgan (International DCA- Oxford)

It is our earnest hope that all participants will take part in our online training. Please check www.sa-debating.co.za for links to training modules. These modules outline basic ideas as well as the more advanced and abstract aspects of debating. Please do have a look at all of them. We’d, all of us, love to class ourselves as advanced, but even the most talented speaker/judge needs to be reminded of the fundamental aspects of debating from time to time.

We are most excited about Nationals 2011 and have every hope of facilitating one of the most interesting and dynamic SA Nationals so far. See you in the Capital City!
The responsibility of an adjudicator in a debate:

An adjudicator is fundamental to a debate. Not only do they facilitate the debating process but they essentially establish the standard to which speakers aspire. From the tournament perspective, every result you give is guiding the tab towards (hopefully) the correct break rounds and, ultimately, the correct final. As adjudicators we bear the responsibility of treating each debate with as much care and gravity as this purpose inspires.

One should bear in mind that a large part of this responsibility rests in your own hands. I believe if you are reading this then you are conscientious enough to behave as a responsible adjudicator. However, reading this manual is not enough. It is important that you make reference to the speaker manual. We have made it as full of intricate explanation of the greyer issues in debating as possible. The speakers will be using their manual as a guide for the tournament. If you are seen to contradict that guide this may cause both you and the CA team more trouble than we’d care for.

Another suggestion I have is that you actively make use of our on-line training programmes to familiarise yourself with the standard we are expecting in this tournament, as well as to boost your confidence as an adjudicator. A large part of making decisions in a debate is just that: having the confidence to make a decision. This confidence comes from: experience, knowing you’ve applied your call to the rules of a tournament and knowing that you weighed up each team’s arguments correctly. We will deal with this further in the next section.

In short, make sure that you come to SA Nationals 2011 completely prepared. Without you debating would not be possible. Own that knowledge and discharge that responsibility wisely.

Adjudicator assessment

At this tournament adjudicators will begin their assessment with an adjudicators test. This test will help us to evaluate your knowledge upon entering the tournament and allow us to rank you accordingly. We need to be able to do this to help us create balanced panels. However, this assessment does not end here. We will also receive feedback forms from both the teams you adjudicate and the adjudicators you adjudicate with. In this way your ranking can constantly change, either up or down. Your ranking is confidential and will only be revealed to members of the CA team. These rankings are also useful but not the only thing considered when deciding who will adjudicate break rounds.
Before the Debate:
The motion:

When the motion is released it is natural to have some sentiment about it. You might feel that the topic is boring or silly, you might strongly agree or disagree with it - whatever your view on the motion is, it should not affect your ability to judge the debate in an impartial and unbiased manner. This means that you must not let your personal views affect the way you value the persuasiveness of arguments in the debate. Similarly, being an adjudicator is not an opportunity to show off your specific knowledge of a subject. It does not matter and, if used to assess the strength of the debate, is unfair to the speakers. Remember that you are an observer and not a participant in the debate. The approach you should adopt in evaluating the persuasiveness of arguments is the perspective of the reasonable, unbiased, intelligent observer. Your duty to the speakers is to judge the debate before you and not the debate you wished could be before you.

Behaviour:
Treat each debate with the same degree of seriousness and attentiveness. It is unacceptable to appear uninterested in the debate or a speaker (even if you are). Arrive at your debate venue promptly and if you are the chair, ensure that all speakers and panellists are present. It is your duty as a chair to start the debate timeously. It is vital that as a judge you behave professionally at all times.

During the Debate
Advice about chairing a debate:

Duties as the Chair:

As chair of the debate you are tasked with 'managing' the debate. It is your duty to call upon the speakers to present their speech and maintain order during the debate. 'Maintaining order' includes calling the house to order so that the debate may begin; ensuring that seated speakers do not get disruptive whilst there is a speaker on the floor and being conscientious of protected time periods. If a timekeeper is not elected, you should do so before the debate begins. (Note: it is always a good idea to time of speeches regardless of whether there is an allocated timekeeper.) Be wary of your panellists and, as a courtesy, afford them reasonable time to complete note-taking before you call upon the next speaker.

Note-Taking:
The notes you take during the debate should be detailed and descriptive. Keep in mind that you are taking notes to help you remember what was said during the debate. Whilst it is not expected that you write down everything a speaker has said, it is expected that you write down the important points of a speech. It is advisable that you devise a flagging system to indicate to yourself whether you thought a point was made particularly well or poorly,
timing, POI’s, etc. Whatever your chosen method may be – your notes should assist you in the recollection of things said during the debate as well as aid you in your oral justification to teams during your feedback.

After the Debate

The process of assessment:

This begins by placing the teams in 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th}. Following this an adjudicator must give each individual speaker a score. The team total must correlate with the position you’ve given them in the debate. (So the team coming forth has the lowest total score, etc.) This doesn’t mean that a particular speaker cannot score higher in a losing team than another speaker in a team placed higher in a debate. It just means that their speaking partner’s mark must then compensate for this to make sure that their total is lowest.

How to weigh up each team’s contribution:

1. Evaluate teams against each other
   1. OG compared to CG
      1. Degree of coherence between CG and OG’s case.
      2. Size and value of contribution from CG compared to OG and use of manner/style.
   2. OO compared to CO
      1. Degree of coherence between CO and OO’s case – less important than for GOV bench.
      2. Size and value of contribution from CO compared to OO and use of manner/style.
   3. OG compared to OO
      1. Responsiveness – how OO engaged with OG’s case.
      2. How Deputies defend their case.
      3. Size and value of contribution and use of manner/style.
   4. CG compared to CO
      1. Responsiveness – CG must respond to OO, CO must respond to CG.
      2. Size and value of contribution and use of manner/style.
      3. How whip speakers frame the debate and defend the contributions of their teams.
   5. OG compared to CO (long diagonal)
      1. Look at POIs between OG-CO.
      2. Responsiveness – especially how DPM and MO responded to speakers before them.
      3. Who did the better job framing their role in the debate.
      4. Size and value of contribution and use of manner/style.
   6. OO compared to CG (short diagonal)
      1. Direct response – MG.
      2. Look at POIs between OO-CG.
      3. Who did the better job framing their role in the debate.
      4. Size and value of contribution and use of manner/style.
2. **Top Two vs. Bottom Two**

1. **Opening half debates:**
   1. Opening teams provide most if not all the arguments, ideas and framework for the debate.
   2. Comparatively little or no unique contribution from the closing teams (poor extensions). Closing teams merely rebut or re-hash arguments from Opening teams.
   3. Opening teams stay involved in closing half through POIs. Closing teams don’t offer many POIs.
   4. Be careful not to have overly high expectations of closing teams – some debates are very narrow and if opening teams are decent, it’s difficult for closing teams to bring unique arguments as extensions. What did the closing teams identify as their extensions (new analysis, new perspectives and case studies) and did it add value to the debate? More than the opening teams?

2. **Closing half debates**
   1. Poor engagement between opening teams – they disagree about what the debate is about and closing finds some compromise and actually have a debate. Closing teams provide framework for the debate.
   2. Opening teams are superficial and simplistic, closing teams provide most of the good ideas and arguments.
   3. Closing teams are involved in opening half through POIs, opening teams don’t offer many in closing half
   4. Don’t be fooled by closing teams that just rehash arguments and do not provide comparatively new contribution

3. **Bench debates**
   1. One side beats the other side. Most if not all issues and clashes in the debate fall to one side of the house
   2. All arguments are being done on one side’s terms, little or no framing on the other side
   3. Ensure that the closing teams have provided sufficient contribution of their own and not merely defended and rehashed their opening team.

4. **Short Diagonals**
   1. Usually happens when OG is weak. Most contribution comes from OO and engaged well from CG. DPM does a poor job dealing with LO.
   2. CO usually has little unique contribution to the debate, or misinterprets the debate and go after OG. They don’t prioritize engagement with CG.

5. **Long Diagonals**
   1. Strong OG, no or weak engagement from OO, strong engagement from CO.
   2. Must be fair to CG. If OO was very weak and OG strong, they will have less to rebut and develop, which may make them seem weak compared to CO – who have plenty to rebut and develop just because OO was weak

6. **Differentiating between 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th**
   1. Better argumentation, style, response to the opposite team’s arguments
   2. POIs – how did teams do in each other’s half? Closing in Opening and Opening in Closing.
   3. Look at second speakers in each team – how did they forward the debate, what new ideas or analysis did they bring?
The discussion:

This is a deliberation not a competition. Time – approximately 15 minutes to complete your ballot. Compare and look for patterns. Here are some possible outcomes:

1. Everyone has exactly the same rankings – celebrate. Have a brief discussion to ensure rankings are the same for the same or similar reasons. Move on to scoring.
2. Everyone has the same except 1 person who has it different – ask him to defend his position. It doesn’t mean majority should impose their view and should be open to changing their position.
3. There is similarity in rankings (you agree on where 1 team ranked in the debate or some relative rankings – everyone agrees OG is better than CG) but also some crucial differences. Consolidate the consensus that exists and use that to break other deadlocks.
4. Chaos. There is no similarity between the rankings – guide a discussion of all the teams from OG to CO and discuss how they performed – these debates often hinge on how 1 argument was evaluated, technical issues, understanding of fact. Use the comparison tools to determine how teams performed relative to each other. The discussion is not meant to lead to consensus but to inform each other of your perspectives and find some level of common understanding. After this brief discussion, rank the teams and compare again. Vote if necessary.

The Chair

A chair is not God. They are there because we have reason to believe that they can handle themselves well in the adjudication process, they are comfortable enough in this role to facilitate a discussion with other adjudicators and they are capable of handling any confusion that may arise in a discussion. Firstly, the chair is the voice of the adjudication panel. They will present an oral justification for your decision as a panel. We would suggest that the following is a good strategy for running an adjudication session:

- Allow your panel a chance to go over their notes and tell them you’d like them to tell you their rankings after they’ve done this.
- Go around the room asking the panellists for their placings. (only)
- A discussion should then follow clearing up any contention or difference in this decision. Even if consensus is immediate you should still analyse your decision to make sure you’ve made the correct call.
- If consensus cannot be reached then it’s the chairs responsibility to identify that the decision should be made by a vote. This should only happen if either time is running out or it is clear that no one is budging on their opinion despite direct engagement with their reasoning by other members of the panel.
• Positions should be finalised about 12 minutes into the adjudication.

• You will now facilitate scoring. Do this methodically. Either begins with the losing team and mark up or begin with the winning team and mark down. This will ensure your totals will generally correlate and that your scores are accurate.

Advise about being a good panellist:

A panellist is fundamental to the adjudicating process. The point of a panellist is either to challenge other opinions in the adjudication or provide confirmation that an opinion is correct. Without this verification that adjudication process is not nearly as sound. Therefore, as a panellist one should be vocal, not scared to go against another member of a panel or the chair and willing to listen and change their opinion if needs be. If you see the debate differently it doesn’t mean you are a “bad” adjudicator. You are allowed to disagree or change your opinion as long as you are doing this for the right reasons and not just because your chair says so.

Rolling

If the decision is put to a vote and the chair is out-voted this is known as rolling the chair. A judge who voted differently from the chair must deliver the oral feedback to the teams. This is an exceptional circumstance and should not be considered as something to aim for as a panellist. The deliberation process is not a contest between the judges – make sure that you have valid reasons for why you feel that your chair’s view of the debate is inaccurate. If you are the chair that has been rolled – do not take this as an indictment on your ability to chair debates or adjudicate other debates. Do not rank members of the panel poorly solely because you have been rolled/voted against.

How to give an oral adjudication:

An oral adjudication is often where teams may become upset. They agree with decisions on a regular basis but they become upset when they feel the justification provided for the decision is not adequate. Be objective and balanced; don’t only focus on failings or strengths of any team. Be comprehensive, cover all major issues and ideas in the debate and explain weighting. Be sure to evaluate the use of style and manner when relevant. Be prepared to justify why other teams ranked above/below another team (again, your notes will be extremely helpful to you). Do not engage in an argument with a team or speaker. Do not get defensive and do not insult speakers if they remain stubborn. Your job is not to convince speakers that your view is correct, but rather to inform them of why the panel made its decision.

Prescribed Structure:

1. Give results first (1st to 4th or 4th to 1st).
2. Explain debate – overview of issues as they happened in debate.
3. Explain rankings in debate – how teams approached and engaged major issues and how they compared with other teams.
Questions after the debate are encouraged! Either in front of all teams or in a private capacity.

**Scoring:**

**Holistic marking**

This means that we will consider each one of the areas of a speech below but that there is no particular percentage of a mark that will be allocated to any of them. Thus, they rather act as points of consideration when marking a speech and the mark itself is a reflection of how all of these things worked together to create the speech you saw. Obviously, the level at which you will be assessing each of these issues may depend on the level of debate you are watching. In general, strategy and style are regarded as tools to enhance the message a speaker is bringing forward in their content. Before beginning the scoring process it is best to consider whether the debate you saw was below average, average or above average. This will give you an idea of the threshold scores you will be giving in the debate.

**Content**

This refers to the arguments and rebuttals made and the examples offered to support them. Content is good when the arguments are logical, well substantiated and supported by examples. Examples should be concisely given and relevant to the point being made. Quantity and quality are both valuable, though a speaker is more likely to succeed with a few high quality arguments than with many poor ones.

**Style**

This refers to how speakers present their material. It is difficult to list *everything* that might be considered a part of style, but everyone agrees on some things which either improve one’s style (e.g. using humour to add to a point) or hamper it (e.g. being so nervous that you can barely speak). It is important to point out that certain things do not count towards style. Accent is an important case. I read once: “everybody has a funny accent to you except yourself”. Marking a speaker down for style is usually due to extremes. While it is acceptable to say “ladies and gentlemen” a few times in your speech, you will likely be marked down if you say it between every other sentence. While it is acceptable to joke with your opponents, you will likely be marked down for harassing them continuously. While some aggression may help you to appear convinced of your case, you will likely be marked down for shouting at your opponents in an attempt to intimidate them. We recommend common sense as the best guide to what is acceptable in a debate.

**Strategy**

Teams each have their own strategies at play during a debate. Your job is to evaluate 1) how persuasive a team was in convincing you of that case and 2) how effective they were in disproving the cases of their opponents. Strategy is not prescriptive and while we can’t tell you definitively what constitutes “correct” strategy, there are elements that you should be mindful of when awarding points to a team for strategy. These include: the use of points of
information, structure of speeches, matter prioritisation, the persuasive value of the matter, etc. Remember that strategy can also be used in as an underhanded technique to try and create some kind of disadvantage for the opponent teams. Your job as an adjudicator is to decide whether such strategies are fair. Examples of obvious unfair strategic measures are: OG sets an unfair motion by squirreling, using a truism or time/place-setting; placing an false burden on the other side which is identified; choosing to respond to the weaker points and ignoring the main issues; badgering; straw-manning (deliberately misinterpreting the other side’s arguments or quite frankly lying about what they’ve said), etc. You are not there to babysit teams that do not identify or alternatively buy into the strategy used by teams to their disadvantage, but it is important to note the effect of it on the debate and whether to credit or penalise teams.

How to assess definition challenges:

Definition challenges can only occur if one of the following happens:

**Squirrels** occur when a team defines a motion in a way that was obviously not meant by the motion. Don’t attempt to be too creative with the motion as a way of gaining some advantage over the other teams. Catching your opposing side by surprise is not strategic brilliance if it ultimately creates confusion in the debate as to what you are talking about.

**Truisms** are definitions that cannot possibly be argued by the opposition because they are simply always true. An example of this is: “THBT the French revolution failed” with a definition something like: “we define failed as “ended” therefore, the French revolution failed because it ended.” It is simply a fact that it ended and not a basis for argumentation.

**Unfair time/place setting** occurs when motions are defined in inappropriate periods or countries. “This house” is a statement in the present. Thus, all motions should be considered in the present unless they are obviously related to past or future events. In which case, their effect is still discussed in the present. However, projected implications or taking a look at past examples in argumentation is fine; one simply cannot define it to that time.

When a definition challenge is justified:

It can only be justified if one of the above listed “unfair definition” criteria are met. So if a definition is a squirrel, unfairly set in place or time or a truism. Give teams who have an unfair definition but still manage to debate, by falling on their sword, some credit. They should however, point out the problems with the definition.

How a definition challenge can work:
A challenge can ONLY be launched in the LO’s speech. If it is not offered here then it cannot be offered by anyone! When a challenge is launched an alternative definition must be provided with reasoning behind it. If a challenge is offered in LO’s speech then the following may happen (hold tight, this is confusing): OG makes a bad definition, LO launches a def. challenge. This def. challenge could be accepted by CG if they feel it is justified and they can argue under OO’s definition. This is now the definition the debate is being judged on (but only if the definition challenge was valid.) However, if CG does not agree with either OG or OO’s
definition they may offer their own definition with justification for it. Now CO can accept any of the three definitions with justification or they can add their own definition in if they don’t agree. If the case arises where there are multiple definitions a judge should see the “definition challenge” as an argument in the debate. This is true for all def. challenges, not just multiple challenges. Each new definition must be argued for, and the other(s) argued against.

Thus, the way to mark a definition challenge is to regard the argument about whether or not the definition is justified as a substantive point. Thus, all justifications for definitions must be properly substantiated. Whoever wins this substantive point is the team whose definition stands in the debate.

**Marking grid explained:**

We believe it is important to mention, at this point, that 75 is the average on a global level not the average in the debate you are watching. An average speaker is someone who does their job adequately but doesn’t do much more. They aren’t necessarily disappointing but they aren’t exceptional. Please feel free to use the entire range as mentioned above. Please do not relish being a harsh marker or a generous marker. Rather, find happiness in knowing that you are a fair marker. Often, the speaker scores of a team determine whether or not they break in a tournament. If you’ve marked unfairly then you are potentially creating a biased break. Make sure that you reference the grid if you are confused in any way and indeed just to make sure that you are marking in line with the tournament.

**In conclusion** we hope that you’ve read this manual carefully and are prepared to see some interesting debates this year. Make sure that if you have any questions about adjudication throughout the tournament that these questions are directed to the CA team. We would prefer to handle any questions directly; it’s the easiest way to avoid confusion. We know that you will do a wonderful job and we look forward to working with you.
## Marking grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-95</td>
<td>Plausibly one of the best debating speeches ever given, flawless and astonishingly compelling in every regard. It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-90</td>
<td>Brilliant arguments successfully engage with the main issues in the round. Arguments are very well explained, always central to the case being advocated, and demand extremely sophisticated responses. The speech is very clear and incredibly compelling. Structure and role fulfilment are executed flawlessly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-85</td>
<td>Very good, central arguments engage well with the most important issues on the table and are highly compelling; sophisticated responses would be required to refute them. Delivery is clear and manner very persuasive. Role fulfilment and structure probably flawless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-80</td>
<td>Relevant and pertinent arguments address key issues in the round with sufficient explanation. The speech is clear in almost its entirety, and holds one’s attention persuasively. Role is well-fulfilled and structure is unlikely to be problematic. Perhaps slight issues with balancing argumentation and refutation and/or engagement in the debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-75</td>
<td>Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, and frequently persuasive. Occasionally, but not often, the speaker may slip into: i) deficits in explanation, ii) simplistic argumentation vulnerable to competent responses or iii) Peripheral or irrelevant arguments. The speaker holds one’s attention, provides clear structure and successfully fulfils their on the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-70</td>
<td>Arguments are generally relevant, and some explanation of them given, but there may be obvious gaps in logic, multiple points of peripheral or irrelevant material and simplistic argumentation. The speaker mostly holds the audience’s attention and is usually clear, but rarely compelling, and may sometimes be difficult to follow. There is a decent but incomplete attempt to fulfil one’s role on the table, and structure may be imperfectly delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-65</td>
<td>Relevant arguments are frequently made, but with very rudimentary explanation. The speaker is clear enough to be understood the vast majority of the time, but this may be difficult and/or unrewarding. Structure poor; poor attempt to fulfil role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-60</td>
<td>The speaker is often relevant, but rarely makes full arguments. Frequently unclear and confusing; really problematic structure/lack thereof; some awareness of role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-55</td>
<td>The speech rarely makes relevant claims, only occasionally formulated as arguments. Hard to follow, little/no structure; no evident awareness of role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-50</td>
<td>Content is almost never relevant, and is both confusing and confused. No structure or fulfilment of role is, in any meaningful sense, provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>