

WDCA Handbook 2017-2018

First edition

Section 1. Coaches

Organization

The WDCA is an organization of debate coaches. We meet twice a year, in the Fall and Spring, sanction weekly tournaments throughout the Fall, and crown champions during the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament each January. We are served by 5 elected officers and a number of committee chairs. Our current Executive Committee is made up of the following members:

Executive Board (elected officers)

President: Matt Cekanor, Marquette University High School

Past President; Miloran Robinson, North Division, Marquette University High School

President Elect: Kedrick Stumbris, Appleton East

Secretary: Brian Devine, Janesville Parker

Treasurer: Tim Scheffler, James Madison Memorial, Madison West

Committee Chairs (appointed)

Judging Standards and Ethics; Ben Hamburger, La Crosse Central

Media/Communications: David Umstot, Golda Meir, Brookfield Central

New Coaches: Miranda Erlich, Madison East and Stephanie King, Rufus King

Tournament Practices and Procedures: John Knetzger, West Bend

WDCA.org

The website is the first stop for information. You'll find the current versions of our constitution and standing rules, a list of tournaments, meeting information, contact information for the executive committee, and a plethora of other details. You'll also be able to download copies of the constitution and standing rules -documents that govern and guide the WDCA.

Email List

Though we have a public Facebook Page (more on that later), the email list is reserved for coaches and is how we share key information. You'll get updates on tournaments, organizational news and a host of other great things. There's a link to sign up on the website.

Facebook

We have a very public Facebook page. It's a good place to see what's going on. Coaches, judges, students, alumni and others are all present so it's valuable to meter what you post. There are also a few groups for coaches and judges to find each other to be hired.

Tournaments

The WDCA sanctions tournaments from September through December. . Most tournaments use WDCA rules and divisions, though some tournaments include Novice LD and Novice PF. Typically there are 5 rounds of PF and LD and 3 rounds of Policy debate. Some tournaments offer elimination rounds as well. The invitation should have all these details. If not, ask the tournament host.

Tabroom.com

Tabroom is the website we use to register, run tournaments, and post results. Coaches, students, and judges all benefit from having accounts. They are easy and free to create. There is a more specific guide to using tabroom on the WDCA website. Please take advantage of it. If you are a new coach, contact John Knetzger at john.knetzger@gmail.com and he can add you to your school after you've created your account. New coaches do not need to create a new team.

WSDT

Each January, we crown state champions in Novice Policy, Varsity Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum debate divisions at the end of the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament. The WSDT takes place on the third Saturday and Sunday of January. All teams compete in 6 preliminary rounds. Following those rounds, all teams with winning records (4-2, 5-1, 6-0) advance to elimination rounds. During the awards on Sunday, we honor 3 seniors with scholarships, the Coach of the Year, and hand out trophies to students who participated in the elimination rounds. After the awards we conclude the elimination rounds.

Full details for the tournament will be in the invitation that comes out in October. This tournament operates a little differently than other tournaments and has some unique requirements. Be sure to read over the invite!

Qualifying for the WSDT

Students qualify for the WSDT by earning a winning record at two tournaments. At least one of those tournaments must be a WDCA sanctioned tournament. Tournament hosts post a list of students who earned a leg at wdcastate.appspot.com following their tournament. The list of students who have earned legs is publically available.

Judges

One of the most challenging things new coaches face is hiring judges. Experienced coaches often have a pool of alumni that new coaches haven't yet developed. A few resources are available, however, to help. The email list and Facebook group are both excellent places to post your needs. The [Wisconsin Speech and Debate Judge Exchange](#) is a Facebook group where coaches often find judges to hire. Looking as soon as possible is always recommended. Though some tournaments may let you hire a judge for a significant fee, others, like the WSDT, will require you to reduce your entries to meet the judges you have. If you are having a tough time finding judges, ask around. Some coaches may have extra judges and will happily put you in touch with them.

The WDCA offers a few resources to help you train and develop quality judges. First, in the standing rules you can find a list of guidelines for judges. Sample ballots are also available at WDCA.org that you are free to print and copy. The New Coaches committee can also be of help.

Scholarships and Awards

Each year, 3 seniors are recognized with scholarships during the WSDT and a coach is recognized by their peers as the coach of the year. Scholarship applications and the coach of the year nomination form can be found on WDCA.org.

Section 2 Judges

The role of the Judge

Judges are an essential part of a debate round. As an impartial adjudicator, their role is to listen to the arguments and evidence presented and choose a winner based on what is said during the round. Though each style of debate has its own vernacular, there are a number of universal items for each judge to know and understand. More thorough training materials can be found on WDCA.org.

1. When you arrive at the tournament, check in with the coach who hired you. Be on time in your arrival.
2. When schedules (schematics) are released, find your assignment and head to your round. Debaters cannot enter the room until you arrive.
3. Fill out your ballot completely. Team codes, students names, points, ranks (in policy), the winning side, comments for each debater, and the reason for your decision are all required.
4. Be specific and professional in your feedback. Debaters are students. They will benefit from suggestions for improvement in their presentation and/or argumentation. They will not benefit from generic, or worse, condescending comment.
5. When you have completed the round, submit your ballot, either in person or electronically.
6. Know what the rules are for the division you are judging. Speech and prep times are different.
7. Some tournaments may have different obligations for judges. For example
 - a. PF and LD may share a common judging pool
 - b. Tournaments with elimination rounds may require judges to stay after their school is eliminated from competition
 - c. Missing a judging assignment may result in a fine being levied to your school.

Adjudicator guidelines

At all WDCA sanctioned events including the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament, the following expectations will be met in addition to those detailed within the Bylaws and Standing Rules of the WDCA.

A. Any judge who finds him/herself in a conflict of interest including, but not limited to, judging a student from a school with which the judge is affiliated, shall notify the tournament director immediately.

B. A judge shall neither shorten rounds nor render a decision on the ballot until the completion of the round. The judge shall listen to the entire round in a fair and impartial manner before making a decision.

C. The judge should decide the round based upon the arguments presented in the round and not upon his or her personal beliefs or biases.

D. The review of evidence by a judge is not allowed unless there is a dispute by the opposition regarding the meaning, context, or validity of the evidence, or suspicion by the judge of falsification.

E. A judge is expected to adapt expectations and award speaker points appropriate to the level of debate being judged. A judge should not give speaker points lower than 20 in policy debate and below the respective minimums for Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum.

F. A judge shall fill out the ballot completely. Comments for individual speakers and a written justification for the decision shall be provided. Comments on ballots are to be instructive and constructive. The school of any judge that does not provide a written justification for decisions, as prescribed by the Tournament Director, will be required to pay \$15 to the WDCA Scholarship Fund for each round where no written justification was provided. The first notice would be sent by the tournament host to the coach of said school. Failure to respond and remit payment within one month will result in a letter being sent to the school's principal by the WDCA President. Repeated violations could result in disqualification from WDCA sponsored tournaments by Executive Committee decision.

G. While oral critiques may be of educational value, lengthy oral critiques are unacceptable. A judge should, therefore, fully communicate his or her decision on the ballot and allow the tournament to proceed as close to the scheduled time as possible.

H. The WDCA does not recognize "Games Playing" as a legitimate and educational paradigm by which a debate round may or should be judged. A judge may not, therefore, employ a "games player" paradigm to render his or her decision.

I. Observers are allowed unless one of the teams objects. A coach of one of the teams may always observe. Active participants cannot observe a round in their division.

J. No high school student may be used to judge any round at the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament nor at any WDCA sanctioned tournament.

K. If while judging a round, the judge leaves to go and confer with his or her team, the team conferred with takes a loss. Any judge who leaves a round for any other, non-emergency reason shall be fined \$20 per round.

L. Debaters shall not leave a debate round for any non-emergency reason or else they shall forfeit the round.

M. Novice limited topics and a no kritik rule are in effect for all WDCA sanctioned events throughout the entire season including the Wisconsin State Debate Tournament.

Evidence Standards for Judges

In 20116, rules were passed that changed evidence standards and procedures. Though officially binding on only the state tournament, local tournaments frequently choose to use these rules.

As a judge, there are some important things you need to know and do.

If a team makes an allegation, you must ask them if it is informal or formal. If it's an informal allegation, continue the round and evaluate it as you would any other issue or argument raised in the debate.

If the allegation is a formal one, you **MUST** follow these directions:

1. Upon confirmation that the team is making a formal allegation of an evidence violation, **STOP THE ROUND**. There will be likely be no more speeches given.
2. The team making the allegation needs to identify which type of violation they are alleging (distortion, non existent evidence, clipping, straw argument).
 - a. Distortion occurs when the evidence contains added and/or deleted words that substantially alter the original conclusions of the author(s).
 - b. Non-existent evidence is one or more of the following:
 - i. The debater citing the evidence is unable to produce it when requested by the opposing team, judge or tournament official.
 - ii. The source provided does not contain the evidence cited.
 - iii. The evidence is referenced parenthetically but lacks an original source to verify the information.
 - iv. The debater has the original source but refuses to provide it to their opponent, the judge or a tournament official, in a timely fashion as outlined in these rules.
 - v. The debater fails to present a full citation when requested.
 - c. Clipping. When a debater claims to have read more of a piece of evidence than was actually read in the round.
 - d. Straw Argument. Intentionally reading evidence that argues a position that the primary author(s) presents for the purpose of refuting it, while, in fact, advocating for a different position.
3. For non existent evidence, use the following procedures:
 - a. The evidence requested must be made available at the time of presentation. If it needs to be found, deduct that time from prep time in LD/Policy. In PF, the team is allowed a reasonable period of time.
 - b. If the evidence is not produced or the team refused to produce it, they are guilty of a non existent evidence violation.
 - c. Teams are permitted to access the internet to access a cached or live webpage used as evidence.

4. For non existent evidence or clipping violations, evaluate the evidence in question and make a ruling based on the allegation. For straw arguments that are made inadvertently, resume the round.
5. You may indicate to the teams what your decision is, but are not required to.
6. You must immediately bring your ruling to the Tournament Director. Your job judging the round is now complete, though you may be asked to remain closeby to answer any questions.