

## **Coaches' Responsibilities**

### **Rules & Style**

Coaches are responsible for teaching students the rules of debate as per the provincial association's guidelines. These rules are posted on the website, but sent to each coach personally by e-mail, and are available from the Debate NB coordinators should they need to be resent. Coaches should be cognizant that rules may alter depending on style and province.

- a) The rules as defined and used in provincial debates within New Brunswick are those that support the aims as stated in the mission statement.
- b) The two styles used in formal competition within New Brunswick are Canadian Parliamentary and Cross Examination

Coaches are to ensure students follow the rules and accepted norms such as : doing their own research, creating their own cases, and not consulting outside sources during debate competitions.

Coaches may not coach their students in terms of content, cases or strategy during a debate tournament.

### **Debate NB Membership**

Each school is expected to pay its \$100 membership fee to remain in good standing for ranking purposes, and to be eligible for those events to which debaters representing the province are sent. These would include, but are not limited to: National seminar, Oxford Cup, Junior and Senior Nationals.

- a) It is the responsibility of the coach or school advisor to see that this is done by the deadlines set. If this is not done, it is expected that the coach or advisor will make any explanations needed to concerned staff, debaters and parents before a representative of Debate NB is called on to do so.

### **Managing Competition**

Coaches are expected to ensure that debaters pay their individual tournament fees, and follow polite respectful behavior at a debate competition.

- a) Coaches are to comply with the coach -student protocols regarding travel, guardianship and supervision as set out by each school and school district. It is the coach's responsibility to be aware of, and to follow, these guidelines.
- b) Should students have special requirements for the debates, it is the responsibility of the coach to make this known to the organizer with sufficient notice ( a week). The organizer will discuss and coordinate with the coach regarding the request, according to the nature of the desired accommodation, to help if possible.
- c) Coaches should respond to tournament invitations regarding attendance as per the stipulations of the invitation. Should a coach be late with this, it is the decision of the tournament organizer to allow a school to attend or not.
- d) Should there be a concern about a judge, the coach should approach the organizer privately first; the organizer will then contact the appropriate debate NB coordinator. Most judges simply require clarification on the role of judge, or a small rule which may best be handled by the organizer who arranged the judge. The coach will be made aware of any action that may be taken.
- e) Coaches will be sent or have access to the score spreadsheets / results. Please notify the organizer if there appears to be an error. It will be checked and corrected if necessary. This may also require changes to be made to rankings.

- f) In regards to access to student scores, it is the coaches who determine how the scores will be presented to their students. Coaches should be mindful of students' privacy as set out in most school and district guidelines.
- g) Coaches are expected to attend meetings and the judges' briefing at tournaments so that basic information can be passed along.
- h) Similarly, coaches are expected to follow the rules of professional conduct with students and other coaches. In that, coaches will be role models of the respectful behavior expected of our debaters.

### **Hosting Events**

Members in good standing with Debate NB are, within two years of operation, strongly encouraged to hold some debate event either for the local debate community or the full provincial debate community. These events are designed to help debaters practice and hone their skills.

- a) Upon holding a ( full) debate event, organizers will invite all eligible Debate NB members, dependent on the nature of the event.
- b) Organizers will clearly stipulate the nature of the event: style, time, cost, date and registration cut off date.
- c) Organizers will be responsible for arranging ( including any payments for) of the event venue, materials , and judges.

While debates in which all debate schools are invited are important, not every school would be able to schedule one. Other smaller, "starter" events might be :

- a debating workshop ( basic, advanced or specialized)
- an informal debate between local schools
- a debate evening
- role play, squirrelable, or "magic wand" debates ( debaters are paired with those of other schools)

## How to host a tournament:

- 1) Please choose a date during the standard debate season – Semester 1 ( September until January).\* Debate NB begins scheduling the new season in the spring and summer. It is understood that changes may need to be made once the new school year actually begins. Still a tentative schedule helps to keep debate occurring on a regular basis, provides guidance for good timing of events and indicates other coaches with whom a coach may wish to consult. As more schools debate, not every school will have a large debate each year, and may not attend all available debates.
- 2) The debates are meant to help debaters practice and hone their debating skills. Fees are generally considered to stay at \$10 per debater. As costs rise, the cost may need to slightly also- a loonie or two at a time. However, these in season debates are for the practice of debaters rather than profit making endeavors.
- 3) Once you have a date on the schedule:  
**Book your school.** You will need:  
a space for debaters to meet ( cafeteria, atrium, library, learning commons, classroom or such)  
a separate section for the judges and coaches.  
Rooms for debates ( it is always safe to book about 10 to start)  
A registration station ( by the entrance or in the meeting room for students)

*Tips:* be sure to alert the teachers of classrooms that will be used as they may wish to put some things away or alert you to anything 'special' about the room.

Be sure you are aware of the school's rules regarding custodians, entrance / exit codes and lights. It sounds silly but...

- 4) **Send out your invitation.** Please try to do so 2-3 weeks in advance, even if it is not able to be complete. You can alert people of a detail that needs to come afterwards for whatever reason. The invitation needs: Date, time, location ( including parking and entrance info), lunch details, style and resolution if prepared or notice that it is impromptu only.  
**Resolution notes:** We coaches ( yes- all, though some will let you know and opt out of the discussion) often try to brainstorm ahead of time to avoid topics from previous years or outside tournaments that may give teams an unfair advantage. You are welcome to skip the input from others, *but please do check in that it has not been used before* prior to sending the invitation. If this is not done, you may be asked to change the topic; please do not be offended if you have skipped the steps. Coaches just want 'an even playing field'.

Also topics are chosen to give all teams fair notice, thus this should not be a topic that the host school has been working on prior to the announcement of the resolution.

Again, it is good to vet any prepared resolution for wording before sending it out. Unless the organizer were to state otherwise, there isn't any squirrelling but some resolutions can be open to too many interpretations.

In a parliamentary topic / policy resolution, the house is understood to be the Canadian Federal government ( see rules). If this needs to be changed based on the jurisdiction of your topic, this should be clearly stated with your invitation.

You do not need a prepared topic at all. Some teams like to have a theme for a day of impromptu debates, but it is not necessary.

Remember that as an extra-curricular activity, not all topics need to be serious or 'heavy'. You can have fun themes, allow squirreling, chose historical topics, or roles if you wish.

**Note on times:** The general schedule for a full debate is a Saturday, from 9-9:30 ish until 2 ish. This time of day is mainly to allow for travelers and judges. Schools are welcome to try something different, but please keep travelling students in mind. Sunday tournaments, and fun "local" debate evenings have had some success. We have avoided full weekend tournaments simply because we have had better attendance on a single day when having teams from all over the province.

We usually have 2 rounds of debate ( scheduling about an hour each), break for lunch ( plan for an hour but you can alter this to keep on time) while students prep for the next topic in the one final round after lunch.

If it is a prepared day, then the two morning rounds can run back to back with only a quick turn-around to find the next room. If not, consider a 15-20 minute scheduled prep time in between rounds.

**Style note:** Canadian Parliamentary and Cross Examination are the two styles used in regular season provincial debates. You may choose one or the other, though by mid season if it is a prepared resolution the schedule is usually the prepped resolution in CP and then in Cross Ex.

5) **Volunteers** *Lure them with lunch and community spirit. It works.*

**Judges:** it is your job to find judges.

**The ideal number is three per room.** That is not always possible. Two will do, or in some cases a very experienced single judge will work. Remember your fellow coaches / coordinator can help you with pairing judges even ahead of time.

Now, finding appropriate judges often brings great hesitation. Fear not. Understand that for a new debating school, it will take time to get a strong judging pool. Do not expect miracles the first time out; those attending should also understand that.

**To DO:**

First put out an all call to staff and friends/ family of staff. Often potential judges may offer another "as tribute".

Most schools have a list of judges, please consult with nearby coaches. They understand. Also there are several judges who will travel to help. Just ask the coordinator if these lovely individuals' names have not been given to you yet.

Try: school alumni, city councilors, MLAs, MPs, Toast Masters, lawyers, a local college or university, and other schools. If your school had a debate team in the past you may find help there. Your students also will have contacts.

**\*\* After finding judges:** send them the judges' prep power point

There will be a judge's preparation session 20-30 minutes prior to the start of the debates. The debate coordinator can do this for you, or help you prepare to do so.

**Student Volunteers:** you should have one per debate room, two if possible to be speakers ( moderators) / time keepers. Nervous debaters ( you can recruit from other schools too), new debate schools who may wish to watch, your other students, or leadership classes are easily recruited. If worse comes to worse, you could throw a coach or parent in.

*They need to be able to read, pay attention and use the timer on their phone. No joke.*

A speaker / time keeper prep sheet is available. Otherwise they follow the script.

Speakers and time keepers can stay within the room while judges confer, but they are to be sworn to secrecy. Similarly in taking the scoresheets to the organizer, they are not to show or tell ( or pantomime) the scores to others then or later.

You may wish to have them check off debaters at registration, collect the money, and direct people to their appropriate rooms. They may also set up the debate rooms.

**Data Entry / Tabs / score keeper-** It is highly recommended that you find someone else to do this job while you look after the other inevitable details that crop up at a tournament. Math / Tech teachers are usually very willing. If they understand Excel, they can do this. A bank score sheet can be found on the Debate NB website.

6) **Make packets for the judges and speakers / time keepers.** The judges need : a scoresheet for each round, and scrap paper for their notes. Providing a pen or a pencil is often wise, and a great little thank you. Each room ( speaker) needs the appropriate scripts.

**Tip :** Have the scripts assigned to, and stay in, the room for debate. This is often a good idea for judges' packets too. The completed score sheets are taken by the speaker after each round, so if a judge has to switch it is not a problem taking over the packet in the room.

Seriously consider assigning judges and speakers themselves to a certain room and keep them there. That way you are organizing the students only, and it is easier to spot (avoid) a 'conflict of interest' should you have one. This can also be done well ahead of the day, then make small corrections if needed.

- 7) **Have Judges, Volunteers & Room Assignments Ready**- There will always be changes. This schedule is the organizers responsibility, though having other coaches look it over is always helpful. A template will be available.
- 8) **Make pairings.** A general rule is that in prepared rounds especially teammates do not debate teammates. If it is absolutely unavoidable, after all options have been exhausted, please warn the coach ahead of time. Even in impromptu rounds avoid having a school debate against itself is preferable.

Often at initial tournaments we begin with some bracketing-rookies against rookies. Sometimes scheduling, or registrations or arrival times interfere with this. It is not necessary to do this; you may wish to consult with others or let other coaches know.

What to call a team? We often label a team by school and number of team from that school ( ie : KV1, KV2, LHHS 1, SJHS etc) This is custom, but not any kind of requirement. Some organizers prefer to keep it simply to last names of the pair without a school announced. That is also fine. Just be consistent. \* If organizing by number it is generally accepted that the #1 team from a school is the most experienced or high ranking. If you want that for scheduling purposes, please say so.

In a prepared resolution, a team will argue for one side in one round, and then the other side in the second round.

- 9) **Scores & Rankings:** A regular season debate does **not** run on win / loss.

To that end, judges say who won a round, but not scores.

In announcing 'winners', we look at *overall scores after all rounds*.

**We announce winners in terms of pairs ( team) not schools.** We announce winners but not their scores or win / loss record.

Most times, the top 3 teams are announced, and the top 3 individual speakers.

Prizes are at your discretion.

The winners names will be announced and may be put on the webpage, or given in other media forums. If this is not acceptable the coach must forewarn the organizer and coordinator in writing.

The score / tabs spreadsheet will be forwarded along to coaches not distributed to students. Coaches will decide how and when to discuss individual score.

Again , in sending along scoresheets or judge's comments, please be sure to send to the appropriate parties'- coaches.

These scores will be used to create rankings and examined in determining students who may be selected to represent NB. If there are any problems, please notify the coordinator and affected coaches even before making the correction. The corrected copy should then be redistributed.

