Rationale for tournament norms and standards

There are several choices when coaches choose to attend tournaments. From week to week, coaches may attend tournaments that are either administered well, or are very poorly run. The purpose of norms is to create expectations for our Individual Qualifying Tournaments. These norms should serve as guidelines for tournament hosts as they begin to plan, build, and implement their tournament. The goal is to add consistency and equality to the state tournament qualification process. All students should qualify for the state tournament in as consistent fashion as possible. State tournament competition is a privilege, not a right. Our tournament expectations and norms should reflect that.

NUMBER OF ROUNDS

Currently, the only norm is that tournaments must offer a minimum of 3 rounds of debate to an appropriate elimination round. IE’s must offer 1 prelim to at least semifinals. These are pretty minimal standards.

**Norm #1 In debate events, all teams/individuals with one loss or better will participate in an elimination round. The elimination bracket may include only those individuals who meet that standard**

**Norm #2 The number of rounds and the necessary elimination round ought to be dictated by the number of entries at the tournament. Here are some guidelines:**

**# of entries 3 rds (3-0/2-1) 4 rds (4-0/3-1) 5 rds (5-0/4-1)**

**10 Partial Quarters (2/4) Semifinals (1/3) Semifinals (1/2)**

**20 Partial Octos (3/7) Partial Quarters (2/5) Partial Quarters (1/4)**

**30 Octos (4/12) Partial Octos (2/8) Partial Quarters (1/5)**

**40 Partial Dbls (5/15) Partial Octos (3/10) Quarters (2/6)**

**50 Partial Dbls (7/19) Partial Dbls (4/13) Partial Dbls (2/9)**

**60 Partial Dbls (8/22) Partial Dbls (4/15) Partial Dbls (2/10)**

**70 Partial triples (9/27) Partial Dbls (5/18) Partial Dbls (3/11)**

**80 Partial triples (10/30) Partial Dbls (5/20) Partial Dbls (3/12)**

**100 Partial triples (13/37) Dbls (7/25) Partial Triples (4/16)**

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Tournament schedules should accurately reflect the times in which events actually occur. Time must not only be allotted for speaking, but in debate, preparation time, decision-making time and/or comments by the judge afterward; travel time to and from the room. In IE’s, the time must account for the writing of comments; actual speaking time; entrance and exit of double entered speakers, and preparation time in draw events.

**Norm #3 The following time limits ought to be set in a tournament schedule:**

**2 hours for each policy debate round and flighted Public Forum & Lincoln Douglas rounds**

**1 hour for non-flighted Public Forum & Lincoln Douglas rounds**

**1 hour and 45 minutes for each round of Individual Events. Extemporaneous Speaking draw times should be scheduled at the 90 minute mark of the previous round**

**At least 30 minutes must be allotted in any time schedule for the power-matching of later rounds of debate.**

**The current norms for Student Congress should be maintained**

**Suggested schedules may be added in an appendix or in a separate section**

**Norm #4 The following guidelines should be followed for an IQT tournament, dependent on the number of rounds that are being offered:**

**Three preliminary debate rounds: 3 rounds of debate on Day 1; 2 preliminary rounds of IE’s on Day 2; Appropriate elimination rounds in both on Day 2; Student Congress prelims & finals on Day 1. If a semifinal round is necessary, prelims & semifinals on Day 1; Student Congress finals on Day 2**

**Four preliminary debate rounds: 3 rounds of debate on Day 1; 2 preliminary rounds of IE’s on Day 2; Preliminary round 4 of debate on Day 2; Appropriate elimination rounds for both on Day 2; Student Congress prelims & finals on Day 1. If a semifinal round is necessary, prelims & semifinals on Day 1; Student Congress finals on Day 2**

**Five preliminary debate rounds: 3 rounds of debate on Day 1; 2 preliminary rounds of IE’s on Day 2; Preliminary round 4 & 5 of debate on Day 2; Appropriate elimination rounds for both on Day 2; Student Congress prelims & finals on Day 1. If a semifinal round is necessary, prelims & semifinals on Day 1; Student Congress finals on Day 2**

**Six preliminary debate rounds: If beginning before or at noon, 4 rounds of debate on Day 1; If starting later, 3 rounds of debate on Day 1; Preliminary rounds 4, 5, 6 on Day 2; 2 preliminary rounds of IE’s on Day 2; Appropriate elimination rounds for both on Day 2; Student Congress prelims & finals on Day 1. If a semifinal round is necessary, prelims & semifinals on Day 1; Student Congress finals on Day 2**

**The entries at invitational tournaments may necessitate deviating from this norm. If entries are larger than be accommodated with this format, tournaments will have the option of holding quarterfinals and beyond in debate events on Day 3. In individual events, a 3rd preliminary round may need to be added to accommodate entries and to go to an appropriate elimination round.**

TABULATION OF EVENTS

Results of any tournament need to be determined in an efficient and accurate manner. Procedures should be followed to guarantee such a result

**Norm #5: Tournament directors are encouraged to engage competent adults, familiar with tabulation software, to tabulate events at the tournament. Separate computers should be used for debate and individual events. If events are large enough that attention is needed for each individual event, then persons should be assigned to tabulate no more than two events. For instance, if each debate event exceeds 50 contestants and the tournament offers novice divisions in the debate events, then each form of debate should be tabulated on dedicated computer.**

**Norm #6 At the conclusion of each tabulation, steps should be taken to verify the accuracy of the tabulation. Double checks should be performed in either electronic or paper formats. Students may be assigned to these tasks.**

**Norm #7 Tournament hosts should be encouraged to post their results on the tournament website. Ballots may be distributed electronically in that manner. Electronic posting of results will assist the IQT coordinator in determining the accuracy of results for the sponsored IQT.**

SPECIAL FEES (JUDGE, HOSPITALITY, ENTRY/DROP)

Many squads use tournaments as a fundraiser for their programs. Realizing that, tournament hosts should take steps to keep costs for individual schools at a minimum.

**Norm #8 The current constitution states that judge fees are to be used to hire judges for tournaments. Tournament hosts may use volunteer judges for their tournaments even though they charge judge fees. However, hosts must hire enough judges to cover all rounds not covered by school provided judges. There should be no expectation of coaches covering rounds if judge fees have been paid. If students are used as a first option in novice events, no judge fees should be charged. Judge fees should be high enough to discourage schools from totally hiring out their obligation. They should not be high enough for hosts to substantially profit from such fees. The suggested number of hired judges would be as follows:**

**12 judges in each debate event to cover panels for quarterfinals**

**12 judges in IE’s events to cover most final rounds**

**3 judges per chamber in Student Congress to cover the final session**

**Norm #9 Tournament hosts may charge a hospitality fee for the tournament. However, that fee should not exceed the amount of $10 per lunch or dinner; $5 for continental breakfast; $10 for between meal snacks. If donations are accepted from businesses, either the fee will be prorated or eliminated. If food is provided to students, the fee charged will be on a per student basis.**

**Norm #10 Tournament hosts will implement the following policies for schools who must drop students from their tournament:**

**No drop fee is charged if the drop is five or more days before the tournament**

**Forfeiture of the entry fee one to four days before the tournament**

**Forfeiture of the entry fee and no more than an additional entry fee for students dropping the day of the tournament**

**Schools must be notified of such fees. Schools failing to pay fees may be removed from the invitation list of the host school unless arrangements are made to pay the balance of the fees.**

CO-HOSTING TOURNAMENTS/SWING TOURNAMENTS

Additional schools are joining the Texas Forensic Association. For some of them, it is difficult to find a weekend for the hosting of a tournament when they wish to do so. In many cases, the demand for tournaments often exceeds the supply. Some schools just aren’t large enough to accommodate all of the individuals who would like to attend. Swing tournaments are also becoming more popular as well. However, the schedule is often not workable and the same school hosts the tournament, therefore violating the rule that no school may host more than one tournament. In addition, students, although competing in only one tournament, are divided in a manner to allow for dual qualification when really one doesn’t exist. Either we need to allow for this, or we need to take steps to restrict schools from doing this.

**Norm #11 A school may host more than one tournament in the following circumstances:**

**A. No other school in the region wishes to host on chosen weekend and there is the need to provide competitive opportunities for teams in that region**

**B. To provide adequate and/or additional space for another school hosting a tournament, the host school would host all or some of the debate events or all or some of the individual events. The schools should be in geographic proximity and easily reached by a sponsoring adult traveling between them in less than 10 minutes. Schools would still need to meet the requirement that a sponsoring adult be present for students in each building.**

**C. A school agrees to host only debate events on a weekend and another school agrees to host only individual events.**

**Norm #12 Swing tournaments must meet the following requirements**

**A. A school may play host to two halves of a swing tournament only if it is clear that the tournaments each are hosted by two separate TFA member schools**

**B. Schedules for the two tournaments should be clearly indicated and should not overlap with one another (rounds can not occur simultaneously with one another i.e. elimination rounds)**

**C. Each tournament in the entry process must maintain its unique website for entry.**

**D. Separate computers should be provided to tabulate results in a unique location for each tournament.**

**E. Administration for each tournament needs to be unique as well. Tabulation staff may be identical, but the tournament administration (host) must be unique**

**F. As much as can be avoided in non-power matched preliminary rounds, no contestant should compete against non-power matched preliminary round contestants from one tournament to the other.**

SPEAKER POINTS IN DEBATE

The 30 point scale is a leftover remnant from by-gone days. Attempts at changing that have largely been unsuccessful. To make this part of the norms to work, there are two steps that need to be taken. First, the procedures for determining team order in debate need to be reviewed and changed if necessary. Second, conversations with software providers (Brent for JOT & Rich Edwards for TRPC) need to take place to determine if we can do what we want to do.

**Norm #13 Speaker points in all debate events (CX; LD; PF) will be set with a limit of 30 points. Judges will be instructed to award no lower than 20 points unless there has been an egregious violation of ethics or deportment in the round. One-tenth points will be the norm for awarding of points.**

**Norm #14 In team events, each speaker will be awarded points according to the above scale. Tournaments may award speaker points in all divisions of debate.**