



# Orange County Debate League High School Rules of Debating and Judging (OCDL HS Rules)

## 1. Resolutions

- a. A different resolution for each round will be presented to the debaters at a specified time prior to the beginning of each debate. The specified time will be determined by adding fifteen minutes to the amount of time needed to walk to the most distant building in which debates are to occur.
- b. The topic of each round will be about current affairs or philosophy. The resolutions will be general enough that a well-educated college student can debate them. They may be phrased in literal or metaphorical language.

## 2. Objective of the debate

The proposition team must affirm the resolution by presenting and defending a sufficient case for that resolution. The opposition team must oppose the resolution and/or the proposition team's case. If, at the end of the debate, the judge believes that the proposition team has supported and successfully defended the resolution, they will be declared the winner, otherwise the opposition will be declared the winner.

## 3. Preparation time

After the round is announced, each team will have no more than 20 minutes to transfer their prepared case onto colored paper provided by the tournament administrators. It is the prerogative of each team to decide what is transferred onto the colored paper. At no point during preparation are debaters allowed to consult any electronic source of information nor consult with anyone using a device that allows them to use the internet or electronic database of information.

## 4. During the debate

- a. Any published information (dictionaries, magazines, etc.) or written speech, which may have been consulted before the debate, cannot be brought into the debating chambers for use during the debate. Except for notes that the debaters themselves have prepared during preparation time and a copy of these OCDL HS Rules, no published materials, prepared arguments, or other resources for the debaters' use in the debate may be brought into the debating chambers.
- b. Debaters may refer to any information that is within the realm of knowledge of educated and informed citizens. If they believe some cited information to be too specific, debaters may request that their opponent explain specific information with which they are unfamiliar. In the event further explanation of specific information is requested, the debater should provide details sufficient to allow the debater to understand the connection between the information and the claim. For impromptu debates, Judges will disallow specific information to which no reasonable person could have access.

### c. Format of the debate

First Proposition Constructive Speaker: 6 minutes

First Opposition Constructive Speaker: 6 minutes

Second Proposition Constructive Speaker: 6 minutes

Second Opposition Constructive Speaker: 6 minutes

Opposition Rebuttal: 5 minutes

Proposition Rebuttal: 5 minutes

d. **Constructive and Rebuttal Speeches**

Introduction of new arguments is appropriate during all constructive speeches; however, debaters may not introduce new arguments in rebuttal speeches except that the proposition rebuttal may introduce new arguments only to refute arguments that were first raised in the Second Opposition Constructive. New evidence, examples, analysis, analogies, etc. that support previously introduced arguments are permitted in rebuttal speeches.

e. **Points of Information**

A debater may request a point of information—either verbally or by rising—at any time after the first minute and before the last minute of any constructive speech. The debater holding the floor has the discretion to accept or refuse points of information. If accepted, the debater requesting the point of information has a maximum of fifteen seconds to make a statement or ask a question. The speaking time of the debater with the floor continues during the point of information.

f. **Points of Order**

Points of order can be raised for no reason other than those specified in these OCDL HS Rules. If at any time during the debate, a debater believes that his or her opponent has violated one of these OCDL HS Rules, he or she may address the Judge with a point of order. Once recognized by the Judge, the debater must state, but may not argue for, the point of order. At the discretion of the Judge, the accused may briefly respond to the point of order. The Judge will then rule immediately on the point of order in one of three ways: point well taken, point not well taken, or point taken under consideration. The time used to state and address a point of order **will not be deducted** from the speaking time of the debater with the floor. A point of order is a serious charge and should not be raised for minor violations.

g. **Points of Personal Privilege**

At any time during the debate, a debater may rise to a point of personal privilege when he or she believes that an opponent has personally insulted one of the debaters, has made an offensive or tasteless comment, or has grievously misconstrued another's words or arguments. The Speaker will then rule on whether or not the comments were acceptable. The time used to state and address a point of personal privilege **will not be deducted** from the speaking time of the debater with the floor. Like a point of order, a point of personal privilege is a serious charge and should not be raised for minor transgressions. Debaters may be penalized for raising spurious points of personal privilege.

h. **Flex Time**

Currently, Flex time will not be used at the OCDL tournaments.

5. **After the debate**

- a. After the final rebuttal, the judge will dismiss the teams, complete the ballot and return it to the tabulations table. The judge should not give oral comments before the ballot is completed and returned to the tabulations table.
- b. After returning the ballot, the judge should give brief constructive comments and **reasons for decision** (RFD) to the debaters. The RFD should take place in the debate chamber in which the debate occurred. No one should participate in arguments or discussions with the judge, although questions of the judge's perception of the debate and arguments may be permitted by the judge.
- c. Debaters or coaches will refrain from arguing with judges' decisions or comments. Questioning the judge's experience or qualifications is not permitted. Debaters or coaches who harass judges may be withdrawn from the tournament.