

# DEBATE BYLAWS—ARTICLE 4

## 4.1 PURPOSE

- 4.1.1 The objective of this activity shall be the promotion of the science of argumentation and the art of debate among the students of the secondary schools of Nebraska.

## 4.2 DEFINITION

- 4.2.1 Debate activities shall be defined to include all interscholastic cross-examination format competition and Lincoln-Douglas format competition.

## 4.3 ELIGIBILITY

- 4.3.1 **Student Eligibility.** In order for students to participate in varsity competition, they must meet the eligibility requirements established for all activities. (Article 2)
- 4.3.1.1 **Certificate of Eligibility.** Prior to the first date permitted for interschool competition in each activity, each member school shall submit an on-line list of all students participating and eligible to participate in each activity.
- 4.3.1.2 In order to participate in a subdistrict, district or state contest in a particular activity, a student is required to have been a member of a school's team or group in that particular activity for at least twenty school days prior to the first day of the subdistrict, district or state competition. An exception to this requirement would be if a student was unable to be a member of a school's team or group due to injury, illness or transfers from another school.
- 4.3.2 **Participation Limited to School Team.** During the debate season, a student shall not participate in any debate competition other than as a representative of his/her school. An exception is made for students participating in the National Speech Tournament and in competition sponsored by governmental agencies or organizations such as civic and service clubs.
- 4.3.2.1 To determine if a school is in violation of permitting students to participate in unauthorized debate competition, the following factors will be considered:
- (a) Did the coach or sponsor of the debate team or organization enter the individuals in the competition?
  - (b) Were school funds used to pay entry fees or any expenses for the individual students?
  - (c) Were school-purchased equipment or materials used by the student?
  - (d) Were the individual students under the supervision of the school while traveling to and from the site of such competition and/or during the competition?
  - (e) Did the individual student actually debate, speak or in any way perform in the debate competition?
  - (f) Was the school name or a name which might be interpreted as a school name used?
- 4.3.2.2 A school in violation shall be subject to a penalty as set forth in Section 2.11 NSAA Bylaws.
- 4.3.3 **Supervision.** The sponsor, coach, or an authorized faculty member must accompany the team or individual(s) in all interschool competition.

## 4.4 SANCTIONING OF DEBATE COMPETITION

- 4.4.1 **Intrastate Competition.** Debate tournaments involving only Nebraska high schools do not require a sanction.
- 4.4.2 **Interstate Competition.** Members of the NSAA may participate in debate tournaments at an out-of-state school provided the host school has complied with the rules and regulations of its own State Association and the accreditation regulations of the North Central Association. Sanctions must be granted by the Activities Association of the host state or the National Association of Secondary School Principals. (Refer to Article 1.8, NSAA Constitution for sanctioning procedure.)

## 4.5 SEASON AND PARTICIPATION LIMITATIONS

- 4.5.1 **Length of Season.** The debate season is defined as the period of time from Friday immediately preceding the first Saturday in November until the last day of March.
- 4.5.2 **First Date of Competition.** No school may participate in any interscholastic debate tournament held prior to the Friday immediately preceding the first Saturday in November.
- 4.5.3 **End of Season.** The debate season shall end no later than the last week in March. No schools may participate in debate tournaments after this date, with the exception of the National Speech Tournament.
- 4.5.4 **One Contest Per Week.** Participation in interscholastic debate competition by any high school student shall be limited to one meet per calendar week (Monday through Saturday), with a maximum of twelve (12) meets from the date of the first permitted contest to the last day in March.
- 4.5.5 **Days Competition Permitted.** Schools shall compete in debate tournaments on Friday and Saturday only. There shall be no interscholastic debate competition on Sunday.

- 4.5.6 **December Moratorium.** Each school year there will be five consecutive days in December where there shall be no practice or interschool competition by individuals or teams in any debate activity. The specific dates of each five-day period will be set by the Board of Control three years in advance. (Refer to NSAA Calendar for these dates.)

## 4.6 TIME AND ORDER OF SPEAKERS

- 4.6.1 **Cross-Examination Format.** The sequence of speakers for cross-examination shall be as follows:
- First Affirmative Constructive-8 minutes. Cross-Examination of First Affirmative Constructive by one of the Negative team members-3 minutes.
  - First Negative Constructive-8 minutes. Cross-Examination of First Negative Constructive by one of the Affirmative team members-3 minutes.
  - Second Affirmative Constructive-8 minutes. Cross-Examination of Second Affirmative Constructive by other Negative team members-3 minutes.
  - Second Negative Constructive-8 minutes. Cross-Examination of Second Negative Constructive by other Affirmative team members-3 minutes.
  - First Negative Rebuttal-5 minutes.
  - First Affirmative Rebuttal-5 minutes.
  - Second Negative Rebuttal-5 minutes.
  - Second Affirmative Rebuttal-5 minutes.
- 4.6.1.1 Time shall not be taken out for applause, but shall be for unavoidable interruptions.
- 4.6.1.2 Time shall be kept with time cards and timekeeper shall stand when time has elapsed and remain standing until the debater ceases talking. The debater may complete a last sentence (with limitations) before retiring.
- 4.6.2 **Lincoln-Douglas Format.** The following format shall be used for Lincoln-Douglas Debate:
- Six-minute Affirmative constructive speech.
  - Three-minute Negative cross-examination period.
  - Seven-minute Negative constructive speech.
  - Three-minute Affirmative cross-examination period.
  - Four-minute Affirmative rebuttal.
  - Six-minute Negative rebuttal.
  - Three-minute Affirmative rebuttal.

## 4.7 CONDUCT OF PARTICIPANTS

- 4.7.1 **Scouting.** Scouting is not permitted.
- 4.7.2 **Coaching.** Debaters shall receive no coaching or signals from their coach or students from their school while the debate is in progress.
- 4.7.3 **Penalties.** Judges are authorized to penalize debate teams for any unethical practices.

## 4.8 THE DEBATE QUESTION

- 4.8.1 **Cross-Examination Question.** The National Federation of State High School Associations question shall be used unless the majority of the schools registered for participation in debate with the Nebraska School Activities Association decide by referendum to use some other question.
- 4.8.2 **Lincoln-Douglas Question.** The topic will be a question of value and will be the spring topic for that year selected by the National Forensic League. The topic will be announced to all schools in early February.

## 4.9 JUDGES INSTRUCTIONS

- 4.9.1 **Judges Instructions.** The instructions for judges are to be printed in a judges manual. A judges manual shall be provided for each judge.
- 4.9.2 **Lincoln-Douglas.** The resolution to be debated will be a proposition of value, rather than a proposition of policy. The debaters are encouraged to develop argumentation that explores the values proposed in the resolution. Students are not responsible for presenting a plan to implement the proposition or to present plan attacks.
- 4.9.2.1 The burdens on the affirmative and negative positions are not prescribed as they may be in the cross examination debate. Decision rules are fair issues to be debated in rounds.
- 4.9.2.2 In reaching a decision, a judge should ask the following questions:
- (a) Which debater was more persuasive?
  - (b) Which debater communicated more effectively?
  - (c) Did the debater support his/her position appropriately, using logical argumentation throughout and evidence where necessary?