

COBIS Student World Debate Competition 2020

Competition Rules

Summary of key rule changes from 2019

- Each speaker will have a maximum time of five minutes.
- Impromptu motions will be vetted, before going into a hat. Two motions will be drawn in each round, with team captains voting to pick one. All debates in each round use the same motion.
- All six team members can participate in the preparation for impromptu debates.
- Scoring is out of 40; 15 for content, 15 for style and 10 for strategy.
- There is no automatic forfeit for failing to outline the team's constructive arguments by the first speaker. Failure to do so will instead be heavily penalised in the 'strategy' marks.

Teams

- Debating teams may comprise four to six members. Each debate requires four speakers at one time, but if a team brings more than four members to the competition, it is at the discretion of the team to decide which four from the team participate in each debate.
- If a team has only three speakers, it cannot progress in to the Cup competition and the same speaker cannot speak consecutively throughout the competition.
- Each participating team must have a coach prepared to judge in each round of the competition.

Competition Format

- The competition will begin with a "league stage", where teams will be divided into groups and will debate against all other teams in their group.
- In the league stage there will be two prepared debate titles and one impromptu debate.
- In the league stage there are two points for a win, and one for a draw.
- In the league stage there will be a draw if each judge awards the debate to a different team (i.e. we do not look at point differentials at this stage).
- The top two teams in each group qualify for the 'Cup', the next two teams for the 'Plate', competitions (the "knockout phase").
- Group position will be decided by points. If equal, the winner of the head-to-head debate will determine the positions, then total team differential scores (i.e taking the win/lose margin in each debate), then total points score, then best individual debater's total score, then second best debater's score and finally, if still equal, a coin toss.
- In the knockout phase there will be a quarterfinal, semifinal and final (for both Cup and Plate)
- Within each knockout competition the teams will be seeded, one - eight. This will be done on the basis of scores in the debates from the group stages.
- If this seeding results in a quarter final rematch of a group stage debate the lower seeded team will swap places with the team directly below them in the seedings. The exception is the eighth seed, who will swap with the seventh seed.
- The winner of the knockout debates will be the team who were awarded a win by the majority of the judges.
- In the event of a draw in the knockout phase, the team with the highest points differential (i.e taking the winning margin awarded by each judge) will progress. If still equal the highest scoring team goes through. In the event of a score-draw, the team with the highest scoring individual (again based on a combined score) will go through, or then the second highest scoring individual and so on!

Choosing the impromptu motions

- All competing teams are required to bring with them two motions for an impromptu debate.
- These motions should be worded to give both proposition and opposition a fair chance at winning the debate, should not require high levels of very specific knowledge and not be on topics which may be inappropriate (for either cultural or age related reasons).
- These should be given to the COBIS representative the day before the competition begins.
- These motions will then be vetted by the COBIS representative and the organisers, to ensure that all motions are realistically winnable by both proposition and opposition, that there is no duplication of motions/ topics and that all motions are appropriate. Some slight re-wording of motions may take place.
- Those final motions which are approved will all be put into the hat, for draws before each impromptu debate.
- Motions will be drawn just before each debate in the main hall. Two motions will be drawn and the student captains of each team debating at that stage will be asked, by a show of hands, to pick one of the motions. The rejected motion will be returned to the hat. The COBIS representative will be asked to break any deadlock.
- All debates at each stage will therefore have the same motion.
- For the quarterfinals there will be a coin toss once the title is chosen. Heads will mean the even seed will propose the motion and the odd seed oppose, tails vice versa.
- For the semifinals and final, once the debate has been chosen the captains will be invited to attend a coin toss. For each match the team who wins the coin toss will propose the motion (i.e. there will be no choice given).

Preparation for Impromptu Debates

- Teams have approximately 45 minutes of preparation time for the impromptu debates, with one dictionary and no internet or pre-prepared materials. Coaches are asked to look after participants' phones/devices during this time.
- Teams will be supervised in their preparation rooms.
- Coaches may have no contact with their team from the time the debate motion is drawn.
- All six members of the team, including those not actually speaking in the debate, can participate in the preparation for the impromptu debates.

Format of a Debate

- Each speaker will have a minimum of four and a maximum of five minutes. Time expires at the end of the fifth minute.
- Dictionaries, allowed during the preparation time, cannot be taken in or used during the debate. The dictionaries should be left in the teams' preparation room.

Roles of each speaker

- First Speaker - Proposition begins, defines the motion and outlines the arguments of the team. Opposition rebut first proposition speaker. Opposition teams may challenge the definition of the motion if they feel that it has been too narrowly or broadly defined, but semantic arguments are not advised and teams should keep to the spirit of the debate. The speakers will outline each wave of the debate (the "team line").
- Second Speaker - Rebuts the first Opposition speaker. Opposition rebuts the second Proposition speaker. Second speaker begins constructive argument.
- Third Speaker - Rebuts the second Opposition speaker. Opposition rebuts the third Proposition speaker. Third Speaker rebuilds the case of the team. Third Speaker completes the constructive argument.

- Fourth Speaker (Reply) - Rebuts opposition arguments and summarises the main points of the team. No new constructive arguments or points are permitted in this speech.

Points of Information

- Points of Information (POIs) provide speakers with the opportunity to engage with the argument of the opposing team during a speech.
- POIs cannot be made in the first or last minute of a speech's allocated time
- There are no POIs in the Reply (fourth speaker) speech.

Offering POIs

- POIs should take the form of a short question rather than a mere expression of opinion. As such they should be relevant and concise, a few sentences and 15 seconds at most.
- POIs can only be offered by the team opposing the speaker.
- When offering a POI the debater should stand up and state "point of information", but other variants, such as "On that point" are acceptable.
- The debater should remain standing until their point is either accepted or rejected.
- All team members are encouraged to actively offer POIs, as this is a sign of active engagement with the arguments. Judges will look favourably upon this.
- While POIs should be actively offered, it is good practice to space them out over the time allotted for them. Teams should avoid 'badgering' the speaker by offering many POIs in a short period of time.

Accepting POIs

- The speaker is expected to take a bare minimum of two POIs (assuming multiple POIs are offered).
- When offered a POI, the speaker should clearly accept or reject it, usually in the form of "accepted" or "rejected" although other formulations ("No thank you" etc) are allowed.
- It is also possible to delay the acceptance of the POI in order to conclude the current argument ("one moment please" or a similar response), but the speaker must remember to then address it.
- In the event that more than one point is offered at a time, the speaker is allowed to choose the debater whose point they wish to hear.
- The speaker should be mindful that the time they are given for their speech is reserved for their speech alone; if a POI should become itself a speech, they are well within their rights to interrupt the POI, address it (if possible) and continue with their speech.
- If a POI is unclear the speaker may ask for clarification.

The Showcase Final

- The top (individual point scores) eight speakers will be invited to participate in a showcase final. However, only one speaker from each school can participate.
- The motion will be designed to facilitate a celebration of public speaking and should be approached with measured good humor.
- The debate itself will be shortened slightly. There will be a maximum of three minutes per speaker, with no POIs in the first or final 30 seconds.

Judging

- All schools are required to have one member of staff who is able to act as a judge in each round.
- **Please see the separate document on how to award marks.**
- The league stage and the quarter finals will be judged by two judges, and three from then on. If possible, there will be five judges in the Cup final
- The judges should award three separate marks for each speaker based on the criteria below.
- The speaker's final score is the sum of these three marks and the team's score is the sum of each speaker's score.
- Each speaker therefore has a maximum score of 40 and each team a maximum score of 160. Please note these on your score sheets.

Judging Criteria and Marks

Content (15 points)

- Relevance- was the content presented relevant to the motion?
- Analysis- did the speaker develop a clear logical argument and use relevant examples and authorities to support arguments?
- Engagement - Did they demonstrate flaws in opposing case? Every speaker must begin their speech by addressing the arguments raised by the other side in the previous speech. Did they make and effectively answer POIs?

Style (15 points)

- Was the speaker articulate and fluent, with clear enunciation?
- Did they use variety of tone, gesture and/or humor?
- Did they read large parts of their speech, if so a lower 'style' score should be awarded.

Strategy (10 points)

- Teamwork- Was there a clear "team line" and did the speakers work well together, organising their arguments sensibly and doing their different tasks well? Note that if the first speaker did not outline what the team line/main areas of argument will be then the whole team will inevitably score poorly on this criteria. Did their speeches follow a logical sequence and avoid repetition?
- Engagement with opposition- did each speaker (successfully) rebut the previous opposition argument? Were POIs answered and made effectively?

Point deductions

- **If the speaker fails to respect the decorum of the debate/uses inappropriate language etc then you should deduct points, depending on the severity. Judges should be particularly strong on this point**
- If a team violates POI protocol (e.g. interrupts in first minute, last minute or last speaker, 'badgers' with constant POIs, spends a long time making POIs) more than once then five points should be deducted from the team's final score. Another five points should be deducted for each following violation.
- If a speaker speaks for less than four minutes s/he can only be awarded 30 of the available 40 marks

- If the speaker continues beyond the five minute bell at the end one mark should be deducted (allow speakers to finish their sentence/10 seconds or so). If the speaker continues to ignore the Chair's instruction to stop then again s/he can only be awarded a maximum of 30 marks.
- A Reply speaker who introduces new points cannot achieve more than 5/10 for strategy.

After a debate

- Results to be announced by Chairs
- The Chair will ask judges to offer brief feedback to teams at the end of the debate. Debaters should remain seated at their debating tables for this.
- Chairs will take the score sheets to the audit room.
- Score sheets for the individual debates will be shared with the relevant coaches at the end of each day. Please use this information with discretion.

Judging Guidance

Detailed Guidance

Marks should be awarded as follows:

Standard	Content (/15)	Style /15	Strategy /10
Exceptional	15	15	10
Excellent	13-14	13-14	9
Extremely Good	11-12	11-12	8
Very Good	9-10	9-10	7
Good	7-8	7-8	6
Satisfactory	5-6	5-6	4-5
Competent	3-4	3-4	3
Improvement Needed	0-2	0-2	0-2

See below for a detailed description of the top of the key levels (Satisfactory, Very Good and Exceptional)

Content

Level	Description
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is largely relevant to the motion. Points are made, but they are not fully developed and there may be no clear structure. The speaker does not address the POIs they are given. Some relevant examples are given.
Very Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is relevant. Points are clearly made and are developed, although the arguments are logically structured this may not be sustained throughout. The perceived flaws in the opposition's argument are identified. This may be done in the rebuttal. The speaker attempts to address the POIs they are given. Relevant examples are given and there is some use of factual evidence. Evidence may not be referenced (prepared debate only).
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is relevant. Points are clearly made and are fully developed within a logical and consistent structure. The perceived flaws in the opposition's argument are examined. This may be done in the rebuttal. The speaker successfully responds to the POIs given. Relevant examples are given and there is good use of evidence. Evidence is referenced (prepared debate only).

Style

Level	Description
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The speaker may not enunciate well and has periods that lack fluency.● They are mainly monotone, with few gestures.● They spend large parts of their speech reading.
Very Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The speaker is generally articulate and fluent, with clear enunciation.● They use some variety of tone, gesture and/or humor, although this may not be sustained throughout.● They read some parts of their speech and refer to cue cards regularly.
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The speaker is articulate and fluent, with clear enunciation.● They use a variety of tone, gesture and/or humor.● While they may use cue cards, they only glance at them.

Strategy

Level	Description
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● There is no clear logical sequence in the team's argument. The first speaker did not lay out the team line.● There is no rebuttal of the previous opposition speaker's points.● They do not offer points of information.● They do not accept points of information
Very Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The speech follows in a generally logical sequence within the team's argument. This will have been laid out by the first speaker● They begin with a rebuttal of at least one of the points raised by previous opposition speakers.● They offer a few points of information.
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The speech follows in a logical sequence within the team's argument. This will have been laid out by the first speaker.● They begin with a strong rebuttal of points raised by previous opposition speakers.● They offer a number of good points of information.● They accept & deal successfully with at least 2 points of information.● Top end marks should be given for high quality responses to POIs.● The last speaker cannot achieve above 'very good' if they introduce new arguments.

Note that if a speaker is not offered sufficient POIs during his/ her speech you should award marks as if they had been offered & successfully dealt with POIs (i.e. the top level)

Using the bullet points

- Under the time pressure of a debate judges may find the following method a more achievable way to award marks.
- Below are bullet points for each of the criteria.
- A rule of thumb is to **award up to 5 marks per bullet point**

Content (15 points)

- Relevance- was the content presented relevant to the motion? **(5)**
- Analysis- did the speaker develop a clear logical argument & use relevant examples and authorities to support arguments? **(5)**
- Engagement- Did they demonstrate flaws in opposing case? Every speaker must begin their speech by addressing the arguments raised by the other side in the previous speech. Did they make & effectively answer POIs? **(5)**

Style (15 points)

- Was the speaker articulate & fluent, with clear enunciation? **(5)**
- Did they use a variety of tone, gesture &/or humor? **(5)**
- Did they read large parts of their speech? If so a lower 'style' score should be awarded. **(5)**

Strategy (10 points)

- Teamwork- Was there a clear "team line" & did the speakers work well together, organising their arguments sensibly and doing their different tasks well? Note that if the first speaker did not outline what the team line/ main areas of argument will be then the whole team will inevitably score poorly on this criteria. Did their speeches follow a logical sequence and avoid repetition? **(5)**
- Engagement with opposition- did each speaker (successfully) rebut the previous opposition argument? Were POIs answered (& made) effectively? **(5)**