

[aodc wsdc'25]

# Speaker Briefing

CAP: Ahmad Tousif Jami, Danh Thai Duong Nguyen (Darwin),  
Lia Denise Tan, Paula Djakovic

# Acknowledgements

[aodc wsdc'25]

This guide draws largely from the training materials developed by CAP of ESDC 2023, the CAP of previous WSDCs (especially those of Mexico 2020, Macau 2021, and Netherlands 2022, Vietnam WSDC 2023), building on their accumulated work. It also attempts to provide additional clarification on issues raised by judges and coaches in recent years.

# Tournament Format

[aodc wsdc'25]

- The tournament consists of five preliminary rounds that all teams participate in
- All break rounds are Impromptu Debates, with 30 minutes of preparation time.
- Debates will follow standard WSDC format (explained in the next section).
- Each team consists of a minimum of 3 and max of 5 debaters. Only 3 members can speak in each debate. Teams with more than 3 debaters may rotate the speaking 3. During the debate, the 1-2 non speaking members of the team will be the equivalents of a silent audience/observers.
- Only the 3-5 debaters of the team may prepare together during preparation time; debaters may use a paper almanac/dictionary that must be visible at all times. The use of any other external matter is strictly prohibited. This includes coaches, parents, matter files, the Internet and any other online resources.
- Speakers must speak for a minimum of 3 rounds to be eligible to be ranked as speakers

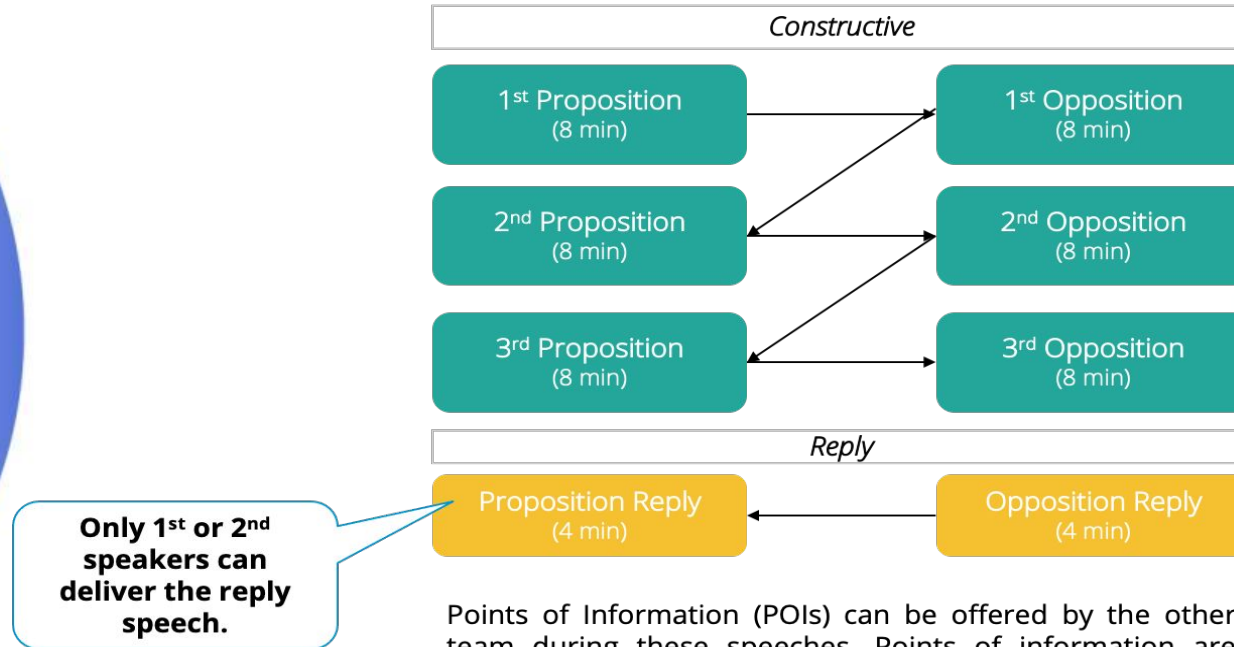
# Ironperson / Opting Out

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Teams may opt out / ironperson for a maximum of 1 rounds and still remain break eligible.
- Should only be used as an absolute last resort, e.g. in a team of 5, 3 members of the team are ill and unable to debate.
- Requests to ironperson / opt out of a debate **MUST** be made **BEFORE** the round begins, and **MUST** **RECEIVE THE APPROVAL OF THE EQUITY OFFICERS**

# Flow of a WSDC Debate

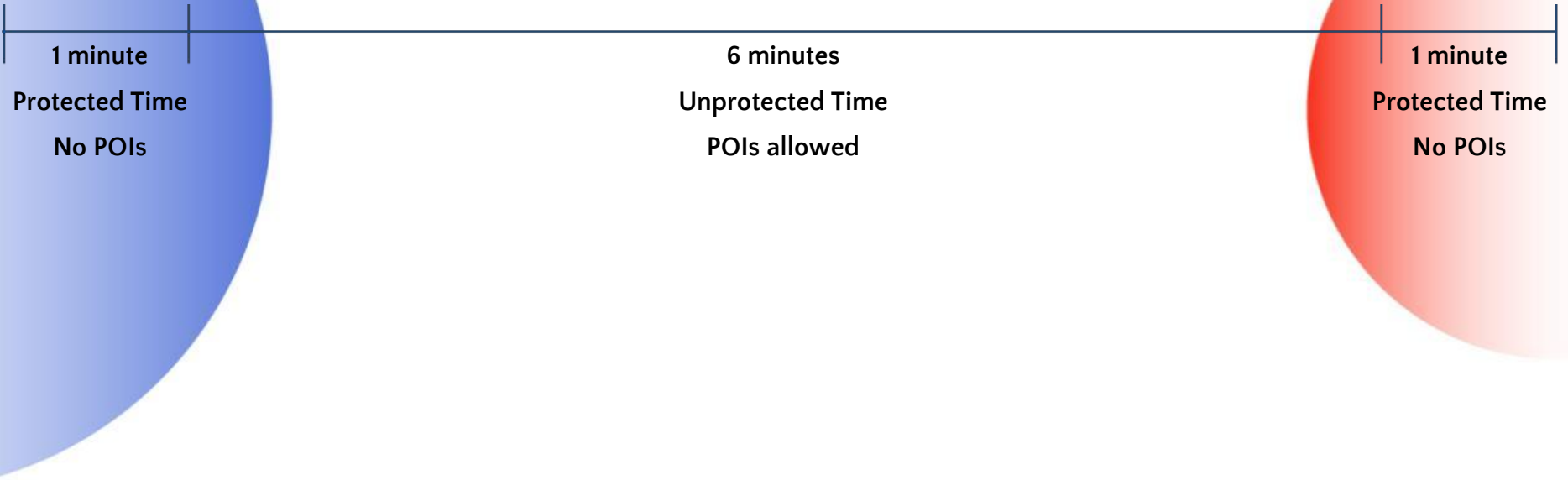
[aodc wsdc'25]



Points of Information (POIs) can be offered by the other team during these speeches. Points of information are offered between the first minute and the last minute

# Points of Information (POI) [aodc wsdc'25]

- A POI is a short interjection from a speaking member of the other team to the speaker on your team holding the floor



# More on POIs

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Taking POIs

- Speaker who has the floor has a right to refuse POIs, but in general should accept about 2 POIs
- If a speaker accepts a POI, they should give the person offering the POI adequate time to express their comment (maximum of 15 seconds)

## Offering POIs

- Speakers may offer POIs any time between the 1st and 7th minute
- Only one speaker from the opposing speaking team can offer a POI at a time
- Non-speaking members of the opposing speaking team may not offer any POIs
- When offering POIs, speaker should not indicate the topic of their POI, e.g. by saying “on that point”
- If a POI is rejected, they should wait ~20 secs before offering another. Badgering the speaker is poor form and is inequitable conduct.

# More on POIs

[aodc wsdc'25]

## **What happens if a speaker takes no POIs/fewer than 2 POIs?**

- The decision of the overall round, regardless of the POIs taken by speakers, should be evaluated by the content coming out in the round.
- However, teams that take POIs are advantaged by being able to engage the other team's material more. Moreover, judges can reflect in an individual speaker's score the fact that they took no POIs.
- In very close circumstances, not taking POIs can reflect poor strategy and an unwillingness to engage.



# Speaker Roles

[aodc wsdc'25]

Roles	Proposition	Opposition
Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the motion clearly in a way that is fair to both teams</li> <li>Present their characterisation of the status quo</li> <li>Advance constructive arguments in favour of their case</li> <li>Where appropriate, identify what the problem is and present a solution to the identified problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must oppose the motion</li> <li>May set up their case purely on rebuttal of Proposition, though this is strategically risky</li> <li>May have substantive arguments of its own, including proposing a counter-model</li> </ul>
1st speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the motion, relevant burden(s) and the metric(s) by which to evaluate the debate</li> <li>Introduce an action plan (model), if the team chooses to tackle the motion with one</li> <li>Advance and develop constructive arguments</li> <li>Flag the case division between the 3 Proposition speakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenge the definition, if necessary</li> <li>Clarify relevant burden(s)/metric(s) for the debate, if necessary</li> <li>Provide rebuttals to the 1st Proposition</li> <li>Introduce their own stance (detailed under “Team Roles”)</li> <li>Bring their own constructive arguments (advisable)</li> <li>Flag the case division division between the 3 Opp speakers</li> </ul>
2nd Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deal with definitional challenges, if necessary</li> <li>Provide rebuttals to the 1st Opposition</li> <li>Extend and further develop constructive arguments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide rebuttals to the 2nd Proposition’s extension</li> <li>Extend and further develop the constructive arguments, if the Opposition has any</li> </ul>
3rd Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small substantive arguments, if flagged in the 1st Proposition</li> <li>Provide rebuttals to the Opposition’s case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small substantive arguments, if flagged in the 1st Opposition</li> <li>Provide rebuttals to the Proposition’s case</li> </ul>
Reply Speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring a holistic overview of the debate</li> <li>Compare both teams’ contributions to the debate</li> <li>Explain why they think their side won the debate, without adding non-derivative arguments for their side</li> </ul>	

# Speaker Roles

[Specific to 3rd speaker]

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Technical WSDC Rules

- The role of the 3rd speaker is to respond to the other team's case.
- The third speech (from either team) may include a small part of their teams substantive case, so long as this was flagged in the case split announced by that teams first speaker.
- However it should be noted that third speakers are not required to include new arguments in their case.

## On “New materials” at 3rd speaker

- Both 3rd speakers should respond to what has happened in the debate before their speech. "Responding" is a broad term covering:
- **1) Direct rebuttal** to an argument that the other team has made, which means providing a critique of the logic in the argument or providing new explanations for why the conclusion reached in the other side's argument s wrong
- **2) Weighing of arguments** by providing analysis of the relative importance of arguments or impacts
- **3) Indirect comments or analysis about an existing clash point:** providing new conclusions or impacts which can be weighed against the conclusions reached by the other team
- **4) New contextual or characterisation** analysis which broaden the understanding of conclusions reached by either team
- **5) New examples** which provide deeper understanding of the arguments being made or existing rebuttal
- The above-mentioned forms of responsiveness often involve new ideas, logic, examples, components of arguments or new lines of rebuttal. It is acceptable for third speakers to bring these new aspects into their speeches
- **"Newness" in a third speech is not sufficient justification to discredit material at third.** We encourage judges to think more critically about whether material meets the definition of "responsiveness" as outlined above and give credit to the argument when it does.

# Speaker Roles

[Specific to Reply speaker]

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Technical WSDC Rules

- The role of the reply speeches is to sum up the debate from the team's viewpoint, including a response to the other team's overall case and a summary of the speaker's own team's case.
- The reply speaker may be either the first or second speaker of the team, but not the third.
- The reply speakers are in reverse order, with the Opposition reply first and the Proposition reply last.
- Neither reply speaker may introduce a new part of the team case.
- A reply speaker may respond to an existing argument by raising a new example that illustrates that argument, but may not otherwise introduce a new argument.

## On role of reply speeches

- Reply speeches are a crucial part of the debate - **they can definitely swing the result of a debate**
- Good reply speeches do not just report on the debate that happened, but contribute to the team's overall strategy and approach in the debate, in order to shape how the debate has evolved and panned out
- New weighing of arguments, framing, contextual observations, or examples can all serve this function and are permitted and credited in replies - however, these need to be clearly derivative of the existing events in the debate

## Notes on Motion Release

- In some cases, unclear terms in the motion might be defined on an 'Information-slide' by the CAP team to provide clarity and knowledge necessary for a functional debate. Any information on this slide is assumed to be true for the debate.
- If there is a word (or words) in the motion that is unclear to you, you may ask the members of the CAP for a clarification on Discord within the first 10 minutes of preparation.
- **You may only ask members of the CAP. No one else.**
- Per WSDC rules, clarifications will only be provided to your opponents, and will not be made generally.

## Proposition Fiat

*Motion example: THW create schools that teach in endangered Indigenous languages*

- Once you read a motion, the debate rests on the assumption that the action specified in the motion can be taken – this is 'Proposition fiat'

### **NOT LEGITIMATE AND IN VIOLATION OF FIAT:**

- 'Because politicians are racist, they will not want to set up schools like these' - This is a criticism that explains why this will be a hard policy to pass overall, but does not make a comment on the policy's merits or demerits. It is not a legitimate Opposition line.
- However, Opposition can question whether Proposition policy will work in the way that proposition claims it will.

### **LEGITIMATE AND PROTECTED BY FIAT:**

- These schools will not be well funded and therefore they will see lower quality of education - this acknowledges that the schools will be created, but questions how good they will be and what the impact of that will be on Indigenous children.

# Motions

[aodc wsd'25]

## Defining the Motion in the “Spirit of the Motion”

- A fair ‘definition’ of the motion should be offered by the first proposition speaker debate so that teams have a common understanding of the debate. For example, on the motion THW allow for the sale and purchase of organs.

*Unreasonable for Opp*

*Reasonable*

*Unreasonable for prop*

Incentives for  
blood donation

Allowing people to receive  
compensation for a kidney, a  
portion of liver/lungs, bone  
marrow, etc. Critical organs  
can be sold by family  
members in cases of death

Paying to take away  
your heart, brain  
when you are alive

# Unreasonable Definitions (Avoid!)

[aodc wsdc'25]

Squirreling: Distorting the topic and defining it in a way that violates the spirit of the motion	<i>"THW ban gambling"</i> cannot be defined as banning risky behaviors such as taking hard drugs, as a way of "gambling with one's life". Gambling has an obvious meaning, which is the betting or staking of money or something of value, on the outcome of a game, a or an uncertain event whose result is determined by chance.
Disallowing side opposition room for debate	<i>"TH supports cosmetic surgery"</i> cannot be defined as supporting it only for burn victims. This would make it impossible for Opposition to do the debate.
Refusing to debate the motion at the level of specificity or abstraction the motion requires	In <i>"THW restrict civil liberties in the name of national security"</i> , a definition that defends exclusively compulsory ID cards is too narrow. Compulsory ID cards may be an example of a national security policy that is defended by the Proposition team, but the debate extends beyond this example to a more general principle.
Place-setting: arbitrarily narrowing the debate to specific places not specified by the motion	In <i>"THW ban commercial surrogacy"</i> , it is not legitimate to set the debate "only in low-income nations". Examples from these countries may be used, but the debate has a global context. However, in <i>THW ban non-democratic countries from hosting international sporting events</i> , Proposition can identify reasonable criteria for what constitutes a democracy.
Time-setting: arbitrarily narrowing the debate to a time that is *not* the present when unspecified	THBT citizens should engage in civil disobedience to protest unjust laws: Proposition cannot define the policy in the context of apartheid in South Africa from 1948 until the 1990s, even though they may use this as an example THBT NATO should not have withdrawn combat troops from Afghanistan: Proposition can set the context of the debate to the period when they contemplated the withdrawal of troops (2011-2014) as it's implicit in the motion

# Motions

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Notes on options for Opp if a definition is Unfair

- There is **no obligation on Opposition to challenge** - they can choose to proceed with the faulty definition.
- If you are persuaded that a definitional challenge is valid, this should reflect on your assessment of Proposition's strategy (their understanding of the debate);
- **Debates are not automatically won or lost by definitional challenges**

Accept definition and proceed with the debate

Broaden the debate back to the motion

Acceptable in later speeches

Explicitly challenge the definition, but still provide 'even-if' arguments and engage proposition

Explicitly challenge the **definition**, explain the grounds for challenging, and supply an alternative reasonable definition, and debate only those grounds

Has to be done in the first opposition speech



## Policy Debates - “This House Would”

*Type 1: This House would... - This House would ban smoking*

- Prop teams may use a **‘model/policy’** to explain how they want to implement the action (not compulsory).
- In this debate, Proposition may do this through a **phased-out policy**, after which point they will levy fines on smokers. During the phase out, they will re-skill workers in the tobacco industry.
- If Proposition teams do so, the debate is then between the action in the way Proposition implements it and Opposition’s stance. Here, that would translate into banning smoking with the punishment Proposition suggests, rather than any punishment Opposition would prefer to oppose.
- Opposition can propose a **counter-model** too (once again, not compulsory), and if they do, the motion becomes Proposition model v. Opposition model. However, opposition has the **same amount of fiat** that proposition does to implement their countermodel. If they require more, they should prove that they can get it.
  - In this debate, Opposition can regulate access to smoking, tax cigarettes and even restrict it to smoking zones. In this case, the debate is between this particular model, and Proposition model.
- **Some motions make what opposition has to implement clear** in the motion itself, e.g.: THW require non-violent criminals to perform community service rather than go to prison.
- Here opposition cannot choose to model it only as house arrest, or fines.

# Motions

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Policy Debates - other forms

*Type 2: A motion being phrased in a different way to “This House would...” can also be a policy motion as long as it prescribes an action that can reasonably be implemented in multiple ways, e.g.: THBT the US should should sanction Saudi Arabia*

- It is useful for Proposition to explain what sanctions and how they are phased in, and what criteria Saudi Arabia needs to meet for them to remove these sanctions

## “This House Believes That” Motions

*Type 1: This House believes that X... (where X is not an action being performed, but is a value judgement comparing two things):*

- Example 1: This House believes that labour unions are becoming obsolete
- Example 2: This House believes that benevolent dictatorships are better than weak democracies
- Example 3: This House believes there is too much money in sports
- This type of motion does not require a policy set up (as opposed to a motion that says THW ban labour unions) and just needs proposition teams to contrast the values in the motion (e.g.: benevolent dictatorships v. weak democracies, too much money v. a world without that extent of money)
- **If a motion specifies a comparative, e.g. TH prefers X to Y, THW do X over Y, the Opposition must defend Y. They cannot create their own comparative.**

## “This House Believes That” Motions

*Type 2: This House Believe that X should do Y - THBT parents should adopt children instead of having their own biological children*

- This debate happens from a perspective of a **neutral observer**. It is not necessary to show why it is in the interest of X do to Y. However, teams must show why X has a duty to do Y.
- In this debate, debaters are required to show why parents have a **duty (moral or otherwise)** to adopt children.
- Proposition teams may claim that adopting children is **beneficial** for those children, but they must also prove why aspiring parents have a duty to help those children.
- The Opposition has to show why parents do not have an obligation to adopt children (they can set up what **metrics** they use to measure this obligation)
- Depending on the debate, opposition may also need to go a step further to show that an obligation against Y exists, e.g.: THBT the environmental movement should use violence to achieve its goals (here, opp teams should show that they should not use violence)

## “This House Regrets” Motions

*This house Regrets X - This House Regrets the use of affirmative action in universities for racial minorities*

- Proposition has to prove that a world where **X never existed would be better**. This motion is **retrospective**.
- Propositions should explicitly establish **what the world would look like** if affirmative action hadn't existed in history. They might say for example that there will have been more willingness to invest heavily in free primary education for racial and ethnic minorities. They need to prove that this **counterfactual** is the likely alternative, as well as that it is a preferred alternative to affirmative action.
- Opposition can challenge the **likelihood of the counterfactual**, as well as the **desirability of the counterfactual** if they concede it. As an example, opp teams can say that in the absence of affirmative action, countries will have done nothing for racial and ethnic minorities (with reasons). They could also concede prop's counterfactual and argue that affirmative action is better than these investments, or would facilitate better these investments than prop
- Note: Teams can make future based arguments as well, because if a phenomenon/event sparked off a trend that will likely result in harms, that is still regrettable as well

## “This House Supports/Opposes” Motions

*This House opposes/supports X - This House Opposes the use of affirmative action in universities for racial minorities*

- Although similar to regrets debates, Proposition teams **oppose X in the current context**, rather than go back in time and imagine a world where X never existed.
- Proposition teams do not need to take on the burden that affirmative action never existed, or that all affirmative action should be immediately scrapped. The debate is **a judgement about affirmative action as a policy**.
- However, when providing arguments for this motion, it is still important to **describe how a future world without affirmative action** would play out in explaining its harms and benefits.
- Opposition teams **can challenge whether the current world would look the same way** that proposition says it would, or concede it and argue that this is a worse world.

# Motions

[aodc wsdC'25]

## “This House Prefers” Motions

*Type 1: This House prefers X to Y: THP social media sites based on a subscription model over those based on an advertisement model*

- In these motions, **teams must only defend the alternative set up in the motion, and not create new alternative or say they prefer a mix of both X and Y**
- Proposition must argue that social media sites which rely on subscriptions as a means of acquiring profit are preferable to those which rely on advertisements. Opposition must conversely argue that social media sites based on an advertisements profit model are better than those based on subscriptions.

*Type 2: This House prefers X: THP social media sites based on a subscription model*

- In these types of motions, **Opposition must defend the status quo**, or a conceivable world the status quo trends toward
- Proposition must argue for social media sites based on subscriptions. Opposition is still bound to defend the specific comparison set up in the motion and therefore must defend the profit models of social media sites as they are in the status quo. Opposition cannot argue for abolishing social media/non-profit social media sites/other comparatives.
- However, the Opposition may claim that the **current situation is changing**, why this change is likely; and why it is preferable to the Proposition

## “This House Prefers” Motions

*Type 3: This House prefers a world in which X: THP a world where social media sites ran on subscription-based models*

- These require the teams to prove that a world in which X (did not) exist is a preferable world to the status quo.
- This **motion is also retrospective** (similar to This House regrets) in nature and requires teams to debate how the world would have progressed had social media sites relied on subscriptions for profit. Therefore, **Opposition cannot argue that there will be backlash** as social media sites set prices of their services as in the alternative world, social media sites which did not set subscription prices would never have existed



## Actor Motions

*This House, as X - TH, as a parent, would not send their children to a private school*

- Actor motions require that the debate happens from the **specific perspective of the actor** in the motion.
- All arguments must be linked to **why a certain actor X would care** about a certain action. Therefore, the arguments should be linked to the interests, benefits or harms that are to accrue to the actor in a debate.
- This does not mean that the actor is always selfish and that principled arguments cannot be made in this debate. Instead, debaters have to go the extra mile in explaining why the actor would hold on to such principles or points of views.
- In this specific motion, the debate occurs from the perspective of the parent, not from the perspective of broader society.

*However, "THBT X Should" is not an actor Motion: "THBT parents should not send their children to private schools."*

- Debaters can still claim that the interest of the parent should be prioritized, but this time as a neutral observer and may also include other interests
- In these motion types, teams must prove why a specific actor has a duty (moral or other) to act in a certain way

[aodc wsdc'25]

**Thank You**

[aodc wsdc'25]

# Judge Briefing

CAP: Ahmad Tousif Jami, Danh Thai Duong Nguyen (Darwin),  
Lia Denise Tan, Paula Djakovic

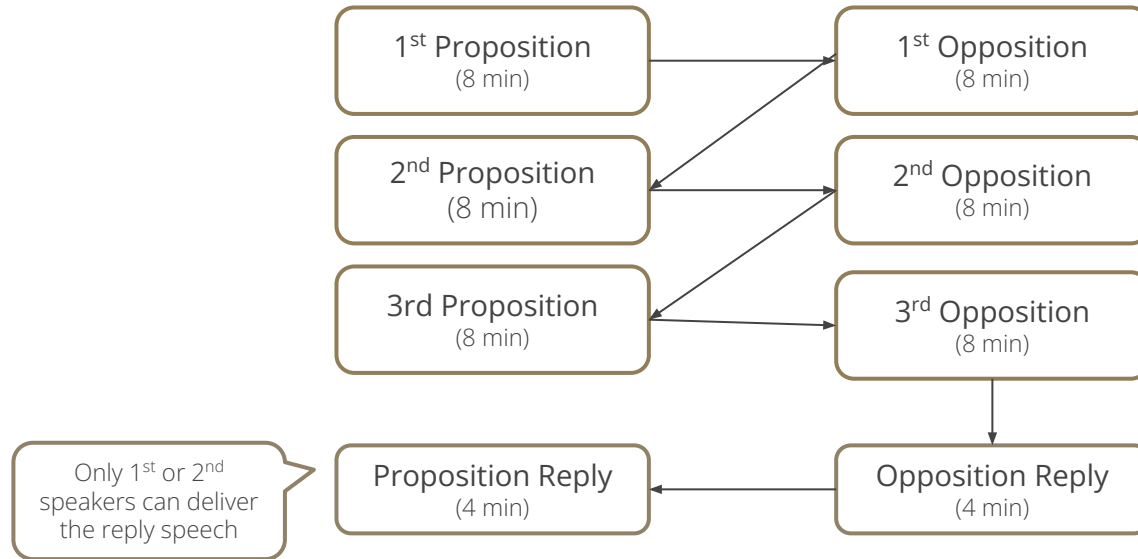
# Acknowledgements

[aodc wsdc'25]

This guide draws largely from the training materials developed by CAP of ESDC 2023, the CAP of previous WSDCs (especially those of Mexico 2020, Macau 2021, and Netherlands 2022), building on their accumulated work. It also attempts to provide additional clarification on issues raised by judges and coaches in recent years.

# The WSDC Format

[aodc wsdc'25]



# The WSDC Format

Roles	Proposition	Opposition
<b>Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define the motion clearly in a way that is fair to both teams</li><li>• Present their characterisation of the status quo</li><li>• Advance constructive arguments in favour of their case</li><li>• Where appropriate, identify what the problem is and present a solution to the identified problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must oppose the motion</li><li>• May set up their case purely on rebuttal of Proposition, though this is strategically risky</li><li>• May have substantive arguments of its own, including proposing a counter-model</li></ul>
<b>1st speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define the motion, relevant burden(s) and the metric(s) by which to evaluate the debate</li><li>• Introduce an action plan (model), if the team chooses to tackle the motion with one</li><li>• Advance and develop constructive arguments</li><li>• Flag the case division between the 3 Proposition speakers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenge the definition, if necessary</li><li>• Clarify relevant burden(s)/metric(s) for the debate, if necessary</li><li>• Provide rebuttals to the 1st Proposition</li><li>• Introduce their own stance (detailed under “Team Roles”)</li><li>• Bring their own constructive arguments (advisable)</li><li>• Flag the case division division between the 3 Opp speakers</li></ul>
<b>2nd Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deal with definitional challenges, if necessary</li><li>• Provide rebuttals to the 1st Opposition</li><li>• Extend and further develop constructive arguments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide rebuttals to the 2nd Proposition extension</li><li>• Extend and further develop the constructive arguments, if the Opposition has any</li></ul>
<b>3rd Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small substantive arguments, if flagged in the 1st Proposition</li><li>• Provide rebuttals to the Opposition’s case</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small substantive arguments, if flagged in the 1st Opposition</li><li>• Provide rebuttals to the Proposition case</li></ul>
<b>Reply Speeches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring a holistic overview of the debate</li><li>• Compare both teams’ contributions to the debate</li><li>• Explain why they think their side won the debate, without adding non-derivative arguments for their side</li></ul>	

# Third Speeches

[aodc wsdc'25]

- 3rd speeches in WSDC style may include a small part of their team's substantive case, IE flagged in the case division announced by the 1st speaker. However, they are not required to include new arguments in their case
- The role of the 3rd speaker is to respond to the other team's case. Both 3rd speakers should respond to what has happened in the debate before their speech. "Responding" is a broad term covering:
- Direct rebuttal to an argument that the other team has made, which means providing a critique of the logic in the argument or providing new explanations for why the conclusion reached in the other side's argument s wrong
- Weighing of arguments by providing analysis of the relative importance of arguments or impacts
- Indirect comments or analysis about an existing clash point: providing new conclusions or impacts which can be weighed against the conclusions reached by the other team
- New contextual or characterisation analysis which broaden the understanding of conclusions reached by either team
- New examples which provide deeper understanding of the arguments being made or existing rebuttal
- **"Newness" in a 3rd speech is not sufficient justification to discredit material at 3rd.** We encourage judges to think more critically about whether the material meets the definition of "responsiveness".
- However, teams should be aware of strategic trade offs made when best responses come at third, even if the material is not discredited for "newness" **backloading responses would count as poor strategy.**

# Reply Speeches

[aodc wsdC'25]

- The reply speaker may be either the first or second speaker of the team, but not the third.
- The reply speakers are in reverse order, with the Opposition reply first and the Proposition reply last.
- **Neither reply speaker may introduce a new part of the team case.**
- The role of the reply speeches is to sum up the debate from the team's viewpoint, including a response to the other team's overall case and a summary of the speaker's own team's case.
- **A reply speaker may respond to an existing argument by raising a new example that illustrates that argument but may not otherwise introduce a new argument.**
- Good reply speeches do not just report on the debate that happened, but contribute to the team's overall strategy and approach in the debate, in order to shape how the debate has evolved and panned out



# The Model Judge

[aodc wsdc'25]

- **Hypothetical 'ordinary intelligent voter'** ('average reasonable person')
- **Impartial:** Doesn't judge teams they have a personal bond with (nation of affiliation, teams they have coached, etc.).
- **Unbiased:** Has no prior idea who is going to win the debate. They **set aside their personal opinion** about the motion or specific arguments. They don't expect teams to argue their preferred arguments or discount arguments they don't like. They judge the debate that happened before them.
- **Open-minded and concerned to decide how to vote** – they are thus willing to be convinced by the debaters who provide the most compelling case for or against a certain policy.
- **Observant and diligent:** Listens carefully to what debaters say and doesn't construct ideas that haven't been explained well. They look for substantiation and evidence equally from both teams. They track arguments, responses, and POIs – and are able to fairly and accurately summarize the debate (not necessarily to the debaters, even just to themselves) before evaluating it.
- **Possessing general knowledge:** Take on the role of an average, intelligent listener and is aware of current affairs and basic facts without letting specialist knowledge interfere with the debate.
- **Expert on the rules:** Knows WSDC debating rules well and understands the words in the motion and the roles of teams/speakers.
- **Accountable & Constructive:** Can justify their decision based on a sound understanding of issues in the debate and the criteria for judging & gives debaters constructive and concrete feedback after the result of the debate is announced

# Judges Should

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Be courteous and respectful to the teams and coaches
- **Make themselves available for feedback at reasonable times**
- Pay attention in rounds:
  - Not checking their phones
  - Giving commentaries on your debate to other judges elsewhere!
  - Taking good notes

# Judges Should NOT

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Use extremely specific knowledge on a certain topic.
- Assess the content in the debate based on the arguments a team could have made.
- Assess the content based on refutation the judge is able to think of against an argument.
- Fill in the gaps in analysis or rebuttal that a team has themselves.

# Deciding the Win

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Judges should determine which team did the best to persuade them, by **reasoned argument, within the constraints set by the rules of debating**, that the motion ought to be adopted or rejected. The judges do so as **the ordinary intelligent voter**, and their assessments are always holistic and comparative
- Role fulfilment can be considered, but should not be the sole or primary criterion for judging a debate.

# The WSDC Judging Criteria

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Content (40%)

- Deals with **WHAT** is being presented.
- Evaluates the quality of content
- Covers arguments, rebuttal, content of POIs and responses to POIs.
- Even if material is **not explicitly flagged** as rebuttal, it may be responsive to the other side's material
- If an argument or rebuttal is weak / poorly developed, it is generally a content weakness

## Strategy (20%)

- Deals with **WHY** content is said
- It's the sum of choices that a team makes in order to win a debate.
- It includes **Interpretation** and relevance of the motion, **time** allocation, structuring of the speech (**prioritization**), **consistency** between arguments and speeches, dealing with **POIs** in your speech
- Strategy points are awarded when a speaker identifies and **addresses the right issues** in the debate, **even if they don't analyse these issues very well**.
- Good strategy can be **Independent of good content**, and is intrinsically tied to good engagement

## Style (40%)

- Style deals with **HOW** the content is presented.
- **Style does NOT include Accents. A speaker's accent (foreign-ness or familiarity of an accent, or perceived harshness or pleasantness of an accent) should never be consideration when scoring for style.**
- **Style is NOT about immutable characteristics of an individual's voice - perceived to be a harsh vocal tone or pitch.**
- Style also does **not include the format** speakers choose to organise and deliver their speech (palm cards, sheets of paper, etc.)
- Style includes **body language** (if applicable), **pace** of speech, **volume** and tonal variations, choice of **vocabulary** (too technical or too lay? Emotive or dry?), **eye contact** maintained, or fixated on notes? (if applicable)
- Bad style typically hinders the intelligibility or persuasiveness of the argumentation offered, and could include  **mumbling, shouting too loudly, or speaking too quickly to be understood.**
- However, it's important to bear in mind that some speakers may not have access to a strong and stable **Internet connection**, and therefore may not be provide a video stream of their speech or may freeze/lag.
- Speakers should be **encouraged to appear on video**, but when this is possible or practical, judges should not apply a style penalty simply because they cannot see the speaker.

## BP Judging Criteria

- In BP debating, **analysis and style are not separate criteria** on which an argument is assessed.
- Style and analysis thus do not independently generate persuasiveness, but describe the necessary collective elements that make an argument persuasive.
- Being persuasive is also not just about making arguments that are, considered entirely on their own, persuasive. Persuasion in debating also rests on detailed engagement with other teams, and comparatively demonstrating why one's own arguments are better than, defeat, and should be preferred over other arguments.

# Evaluating Analysis

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Arguments

Merely stating a consequence v.  
explaining why it is a consequence and  
its impact  
Quality of analysis (missing logical links)

## Rebuttal

Misrepresenting and then attacking v.  
attacking the actual argument  
Stating an argument is false v. using  
logical steps to disprove it

## Examples

Quality of examples (broadly applicable  
or cherry-picked? generalised or  
personal anecdotes?)  
Stating overly specific, irrelevant  
examples v. explaining relevant  
persuasive examples

What is good analysis?

- Rigorous Logic: Links made, conclusion cleanly derived from assumptions
- Goes beyond assertions: not just claiming outcomes such as harms and benefits without analysis to back up why that outcome is likely.
- Relevance: Decided on by the teams, and what they make relevant to the debate
- **Relative Importance**: Why is this argument important in the world/in the debate?
- Tracking **Evolution**: Responding to responses, adding new illustrations/language

How should knowledge of good analysis affect judge behavior?

- A good judge never takes what teams say they have proven at face value; always **check if they actually did so!** Labels can be misleading
- Saying why something is important is not the same as proving that it happens.

# Points of Information

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Speeches are 8 minutes!, POIs after 1st and before the last minute.
- Judges should track how many POIs were accepted and the content of POIs and responses to POIs
- **We ask judges to be mindful of the impact of POIs in the round, and to assess POIs as part of individual Strategy.**
- **Track them:** how many offered and how many accepted and what was said.



# What are 'Issues' in a debate?

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Issues (or contentions, questions) are often questions that help you decide whether a particular motion should pass or fall.
  - There could be many issues such as the clashes/issues most discussed. Not all issues are of equal importance, and you have to identify which issues are more crucial to winning the debate than others.
- How do you identify the main issues in a debate?
  - Preferably, the debaters do it for you by explicitly identifying them.
  - If the debaters do not, you will have to track and evaluate arguments and engagement. **It is important to identify issues as they emerged in the debate, and NOT enter and decide what issues should have emerged.**
  - Possible Metrics include:
    - What were/became the most important issues raised in the debate?
    - Who won those issues effectively, through the arguments and evidence provided?



# Weighing Issues

[aodc wsdC'25]

- After deciding on the issues in the debate, you will need to decide the relative importance of each issue vis-à-vis each other.
- **How can we 'rank' or 'weigh' out issues in a debate?**
  - What did teams explicitly agree on as important?
  - If unclear, what did teams agree to be important implicitly?
  - If it is also unclear, what reasons were given by each team to explain why a particular issue matters more (weighing)?
  - IF, AND ONLY IF, no weighing was attempted, then you may REASONABLY enter the debate as an average reasonable person (see earlier) to decide how they would weigh it – e.g. quantity impacted, extent of impact.
- **Evaluate who won the issue, and subsequently, the debate.**
  - Compare the contribution of both teams on a given issue (rebuttal and argument)
  - Decide which team ultimately won the issue – was there important material that stood at the end that was left un-responded? Did existing responses adequately take down the core of a point that was made?

# Conferral Judging

[aodc wsdc'25]

- **This means:**
  - During the debate, judges will judge the debate as per normal.
  - At the conclusion of the debate, judges first come to an initial / preliminary decision. **They will then discuss their decision and the debate with the other judge(s) on the panel before individually coming to their final decision.**
  - The purpose of the discussion is **not to reach a 'consensus'** but rather to allow judges to make the most informed decision possible by taking into account as much information as possible.
  - Judges may change their initial decision at any point of the conferral process.
  - Judges **will submit a separate ballot**, i.e. each room will have the same number of panels and ballots submitted e.g., 2 panels means 2 ballots from that room.

# The Deliberation / Discussion

[aodc wsdc'25]

- The Panel Chair will lead the discussion.
- Deliberation should **take between 15-20 minutes, including submission of ballots.**
- Intention of the deliberation is **NOT** to convince other members of the panel to change their decision. Rather, it is meant for the judges on the panel to make the most informed decision by taking into account as much information as possible.
- **It is perfectly acceptable if judges change their verdict after the discussion. Similarly, it is also perfectly acceptable if judges do not change their verdict after the discussion.**
- Judges submit their own ballot at the end of the deliberation.
- In the event of a split on an even panel, the Chair gets the casting vote (i.e. they have 2 votes).

# Guide on Facilitating Conferral

[aodc wsdC'25]

- Have all judges announce who they preliminarily thought won the debate
- Panel Chair is to inform the panel that the discussion is not meant for the panel to reach a consensus, but is instead aimed at allowing judges to make the most informed decision possible by taking into account as much information as possible. Hence, if judges wish to change their decisions as a result of the discussion, they can.
- Panel Chair provides a few metrics / clashes / issues / contentions / questions they had considered to be important in judging the debate and opens the floor for the panel to provide more metrics.
- Panel deliberates on each metric / clash / issue / contention / question using the categories of Style, Content and Strategy, discussing what material (both positive and negative) that was provided by each team and evaluating how the metrics / clash / issues / contentions / questions played out in the round, and why the debate went the way it did.
- In the event of a split, the chair should ask the dissenting judge(s) to highlight key areas of difference from the rest of the panel.
- The Panel Chair should ask the panel if they had any extraneous thoughts on the debate that they would like to highlight to the panel/debaters.
- Each member of the panel submits their own individual ballot, separately from the other judges. Upon which, the Panel Chair should ask all panelists to announce their final decision. This decision will be the one announced to teams.
- If necessary (e.g. if the Chair is now out-voted by their panelist), the panel may have an additional 5 minutes to further discuss the verdict. This would usually involve the Chair asking one member of the majority to deliver the Oral Adjudication.
- Panel returns, and one member of the Panel (usually the Panel Chair) will deliver the oral adjudication.

# WSDC Scoring Criteria

[aodc wsdc'25]

- We use a tripartite scoring system consisting of
- Style: 40% (40 points)
- Content: 40% (40 points)
- Strategy: 20% (20 points)
- Rather than rigidly seeing these three parts as discrete elements when determining speaker scores, these three parts should help a judge understand what team did the best job during the debate overall.
- The speaker scores are a mathematical expression of your decision and they help you evaluate the individual performance of a speaker.

# Speaker Scale

[aodc wsdc'25]

Standard	Overall (/100)	Style (/40)	Content (/40)	Strategy (/20)
Exceptional	80	32	32	16
Excellent	76-79	31	31	15-16
Extremely Good	74-75	30	30	15
Very Good	71-73	29	29	14-15
Good	70	28	28	14
Satisfactory	67-69	27	27	13-14
Competent	65-66	26	26	13
Pass	61-64	25	25	12-13
Improvement Needed	60	24	24	12

BP

- In BP debating, speeches are marked out of 100%, holistically
- The speaker scale is between 50-100
- The average speech is around 74-75

WSDC

- In WSDC debating, main speeches are marked out of 100%
- The WSDC speaker scale is between 60-80
- The average speech is 70
- Half marks (0.5) are the lowest fraction allowed.
- Reply speeches are marked out of 50%.
- An average reply speech is 35

# Scoring Substantive Speeches

[aodc wsdc'25]

Mark	Standard
60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Content is not relevant to the motion and what the team needs to prove.</li><li>• All points made are claims, with no analysis, and are confusing.</li><li>• The speech is hard to follow throughout, so it is hard to give it any credit.</li></ul>
61-63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few marginally relevant claims.</li><li>• No analysis provided in the claims, which are mainly lines without explanation.</li><li>• Parts of the speech are clear, but significant parts are still hard to follow.</li></ul>
64 - 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of the points made are relevant to the debate.</li><li>• Arguments / rebuttals are made with some explanation and analysis, but with significant logical gaps in the explanation.</li><li>• Sometimes the speech is difficult to follow.</li></ul>
67 - 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most of the points made are relevant to the debate.</li><li>• All arguments / rebuttals have some explanation, but it still has logical and analytical gaps in important parts of the argument and lacks evidence.</li><li>• Mostly easy to follow, but some sections may still be hard to understand.</li></ul>
70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No major shortfalls, nor any strong moments.</li><li>• Arguments are <b>almost exclusively relevant, although may fail to address one or more core issues sufficiently.</b></li><li>• <b>All arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps</b> and some examples, but are simplistic and easy to attack.</li><li>• <b>Easy to follow throughout</b> which makes the speech understandable, though style does not necessarily serve to make the speech more persuasive.</li></ul>



# Scoring Substantive Speeches

[aodc wsdc'25]

Mark	Standard
71 - 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arguments are all relevant, and address the core issues in the debate.</li><li><b>All arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps</b> and most have credible evidence. Some points raised may have minor logical gaps or deficits in explanation.</li><li>Easy to follow throughout. On occasion the style may even serve to make the speech more engaging and persuasive.</li></ul>
73 - 76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arguments are relevant and engage with <b>the most important issues</b>. Arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps.</li><li>Occasionally, the speaker provides more sophisticated and nuanced analysis, making their arguments <b>hard to attack</b>.</li><li>Easy to follow throughout. On occasion the style may even serve to make the speech more engaging and persuasive.</li></ul>
77 - 79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arguments are all relevant and well-illustrated, and address the core issues in the debate, with thorough explanations, no logical gaps, and credible examples, making them hard to attack</li><li>Easy to follow throughout. The style serves to make the speech's content more engaging.</li></ul>
80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plausibly one of the best debating speeches ever given in a schools competition.</li><li>It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.</li><li>Flawless and compelling arguments, made with outstanding delivery.</li></ul>



# Scoring Reply speeches

[aodc wsdc'25]

Mark	Standard
30	The speaker did not describe the debate as it happened. They misunderstood or misrepresented central arguments and responses.
31-34	Instead of actually identifying or analysing points of clash, speaker mostly just retold the debate as it happened or attempted to keep arguing for their side.
35	Speaker identified the major points of clash between two teams and was able to provide some basic justification for awarding the win to speaker's team.
36-39	Almost perfect overview of the debate. Particular interactions from the debate were analysed and used as evidence for awarding the win to the speaker's team.
40	Flawless analysis of the debate that just occurred. Speaker was able to accurately identify turning points in the debate (including the strongest arguments and rebuttal of their opponents) and why they their side wins on balance

## Top Ten Speaker Average Scores at Previous WSDCs (For Reference)

[aodc wsdc'25]

### Past average scores:

- WSDC 2019 (Bangkok): 73.4 to 74.23
- WSDC 2020 (Online, Mexico): Maya Division: 72.63 to 73.11 & Aztec Division: 72.78 to 73.67
- WSDC 2021 (Online, Macau): 72.33 to 73.17
- WSDC 2022 (Online, Netherlands): 72.5 to 72.96
- WSDC 2023 (Vietnam): 74.17 to 73.60

### What this means:

- If you give a speech a 73 and above, you are suggesting that the speech would be a speech given by a Top Ten speaker at WSDC.
- If you give someone a 75. You are suggesting that this speaker could be the Top Speaker at WSDC.
- ***We would note to not shy away from using full-scale IF and when applicable.***

# Oral Adjudication (OA)/ Reason for Decision (RFD)

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Judges need to decide a winner between the 2 teams.
- Judges announce the results first (and whether it was a split/unanimous decision).
- Judges deliver their RFD based on Content, Style and Strategy.
  - When discussing content, judges should focus on the issues in the debate – which issues were important, which team won each issue and why. Be specific, making close reference to the relevant speeches.
- Judges should be comparative when discussing content, style and strategy, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each team.
- Judges should try to spend an **equal amount of time on both teams, and balance positive and critical comments.**
- Keep it succinct – don't spend longer than 5-10 minutes.
- Tell teams they may approach the panel for individual feedback (with a responsible adult around) after.

# Effective OA / RFD

[aodc wsdc'25]

## Content

- Were the arguments well explained?
- Were they merely stating a consequence vs. explaining why it is a consequence and its impact

## Strategy

- Did they dilute the importance of their arguments?
- Did they spend too much or little time on rebuttals?

## Style

- Were speakers clear?
- Were they disruptive during the debate?
- How did their style impact their speech?



Use their words and examples



Be comparative



Show confidence in your decision



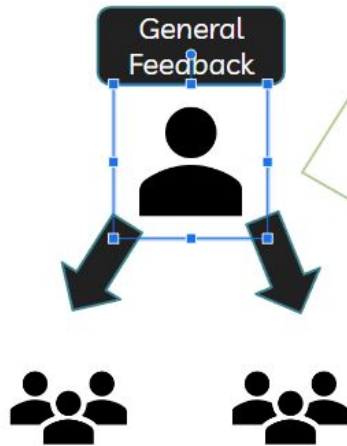
Don't be vague



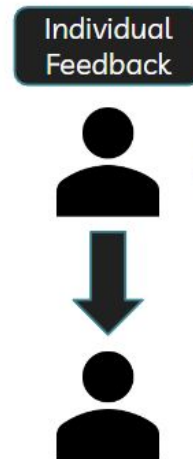
Don't be too harsh or overemphasize the winning team

# OA / RFD v. Individual Feedback

[aodc wsdc'25]



- Are issues in the debate equally important, or are some more important than others? Why?
- Which teams won on specific issues and why?



- Provide more in-depth feedback per speaker (what they did well, what they can do better in the next round - better responses/additional arguments they could have run)
- Responses to any questions they may have!
- Do not single out speakers for doing poorly.
- Keep it friendly and constructive

# Important Reminders

[aodc wsdc'25]

- Judges should always be in the General Auditorium AT LEAST 15 minutes before the start of each round.
- **Please make sure that you have the debaters' names and speaking positions.**
- The panel will have 15-20 minutes to decide, discuss and submit their ballots.
- DON'T BE LATE!

[aodc wsdc'25]

**Thank You**