

District 91

Notes for Voting Judges' Briefing: Online Contest Edition

Version 1.02, October 2020

Conducted by: Chief Judge

When: several days before the contest and after the Contest Chair's Contestant Briefing (where the speaking area is confirmed)

Where: the same platform as the contest (e.g. Zoom)

Attendees: Chief Judge, Voting Judges, backup Chief Judge. The Tiebreaking Judge does NOT attend and is briefed separately

Final Checks

Confirm that all Judges:

- ... are eligible to judge the contest:

For Club contests:

- All Judges must be paid members

For Area contests:

- All Judges must be paid members for a minimum of 6 months
- All Judges must have completed a minimum of six speech projects in *Competent Communication* or earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience
- Judges must no longer be competing or intending to compete, at any level in the contest

For Division and District contests:

- In addition to the Area contest requirements above, no Judge can be from the same club as any competitor

- ... have completed and returned their Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics
- ... have received the link to the latest rulebook, the Online Speech Contest Exception and the Ballot sheet(s) for the contest(s) they are judging
- ... have a method of communication with the Chief Judge, e.g. the Judges' WhatsApp group
- ... have the email addresses of the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters for submitting their Ballot

Give each judge an anonymous name that they are to use when they join the contest e.g. Judge 1, Judge 2, etc. and take note of who has been given which anonymous name. (Keep the names to the same format to allow your meeting moderator to move judges to breakout rooms easily.)

Briefing the Judges

The Goal of Judging

To pick distinct 1st, 2nd and 3rd places

Before the Contest

- Prepare your ballot sheet by either:
 - Signing and printing your name on a printed copy of the form
 - Or electronically signing the form using a photo of your signature or a stylus
- Read and familiarise yourself with the Judging Criteria and weightings

Arriving at the Contest

- Arrive 45 minutes ahead of the contest start time
- Anonymise yourself before you join the meeting:
 - Camera and microphone should be switched off and stay off throughout the contest meeting
 - Disable any profile picture.
 - Rename yourself to your anonymous judge name
- All judges will be placed in a breakout room with the Chief Judge upon arrival for any final questions and to confirm your identities

During the Contest

- The speaking order will be posted in the Judges' WhatsApp group
- Write the names across the top of the ballot; left to right or right to left depending on preference
- If you need anything, WhatsApp the Chief Judge who will ask Contest Chair for you. Do not enable your microphone/camera
- After each speech, there is 1 minute of silence to mark against the criteria
- After the last speech, Judges will be moved to a breakout room for an unlimited length of silence while they complete their Ballot
- Completing your Ballot:
 - Award 1st, 2nd and 3rd.
 - No ties allowed! If you have two speakers with the same points, it is up to you to break that tie.
 - Photograph or screengrab your completed ballot slip. Do not submit the workings at the top of the form, so crop the screengrab if necessary.
 - Email to Chief Judge and ballot counters with subject "Ballot – [your name]".
 - If there are problems in receiving the ballot via e-mail we will arrange another method with you e.g. WhatsApp.
- When all Ballots are received, the Zoom Master will move you out of the breakout room.

Marking and Fairness

- When considering delivery, a speaker looking at the camera is considered “eye contact”
- A speaker going outside the speaking area is not a disqualifiable offence; however, you may wish to reflect this in your marks for delivery
- When marking for “audience response” use your own personal reaction
- Do not pay any attention to a speaker’s timing signals when marking

- Judges must NOT consider:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Race
 - Creed
 - Nationality
 - Regional or foreign accents
 - Professional beliefs
 - Past performance or reputation
 - Future performance – how a speech might do if given another chance at the next level
 - Championing an underdog – encouraging the newbie or giving someone else a chance
 - Their own club norms
 - Video and audio quality – this is not a competition for who can afford the best equipment

Judge only on the performance on the day. Be sure to judge the first and last speaker in the same manner.

In the event of Technical Issues...

- If technology fails and the contest can no longer continue (due to a lack of contestants or contest officials), the Chief Judge will reconvene the contest at later date or time. We will, however, aim to reconvene immediately if possible, so monitor the agreed communication channel (e.g. WhatsApp)
- If the technology of one contestant fails, the Chief Judge will pause the contest until the technology issue is resolved. When rectified, the Contestant will resume their speech at the point at which the technology failed
- The Chief Judge will not intervene for small dropouts of audio or video and Judges may have to judge on what they saw and heard
- Judges might be required to judge an incomplete speech if a contestant has a technical failure that cannot be rectified
- If a Judge has a technology failure that means they are no longer able to judge all contestants fairly, they should inform the Chief Judge and renounce their role as Judge.
- If the Tiebreaker Judge has a technology failure, the Chief Judge will message one of the voting judges to take over the role i.e. they rank ALL contestants on their Ballot (not just 1st, 2nd, 3rd)

Protests

Protests can be made on eligibility, originality and referencing of another competitor's speech (within the same contest).

- **Eligibility**
 - Contestant eligibility checks will have been performed by the contest organiser or Contest Chair
- **Originality**
 - Contestants create their own speeches which must be substantially original:
 - If a contestant uses someone else's material they must attribute it within the speech
 - A maximum of 25% of non-original material may be used in the speech
 - More than 25% is grounds for protest, even if attributed
 - Less than 25% but not attributed is grounds for protest
- **Referencing another competitor's speech – New Rule for 2020/21**
 - Contestants must not reference another contestant, or a speech presented by another contestant, from the platform at the same contest in which they are competing. This is grounds for protest

Raising a protest

- **WHEN:** All protests must be made before the award announcement
- **WHO:** Voting Judges or Contestants only – a protest cannot originate from the Tiebreaking Judge or audience members
- **HOW:**
 - Contact the Chief Judge or write PROTEST on the ballot
 - The Chief Judge will ask the meeting moderator to move all Voting Judges to a breakout room
 - The protest is discussed and, if it is decided to proceed (by majority vote), the Contestant is given an opportunity to respond. The Contestant is added to the breakout room and the Chief Judge discusses the protest with them
 - After the discussion, the Contestant is removed from the breakout room and returned to the contest room
 - A majority vote on whether to disqualify or not is then conducted
 - Once decided; it is final
 - All announcements are final

After the Contest

- Do not discuss notes
- Do not discuss the result
- Make no comment or criticism of the contest
- Decline feedback requests
- Destroy your Ballot Slips, Ballot Sheets and any notes
- Remember to change your name back before your next meeting!

Questions?