

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

The following excerpts from the bylaws contain the most relevant information for this category. Full tournament procedures are found in the bylaws.

NCFL Bylaws Article II Grand National Tournament

Section C – Events: Definitions and Procedures

3. Debate Definitions

c. Public Forum Debate:

1) Public Forum Debate is a team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the resolution. The focus of the debate is a clash of ideas in a persuasive manner that can be understood by a “lay” judge. Good debaters should display logic and analysis. They should use evidence when needed. They should win their case and refute that of their opponents. They should communicate effectively, using the fundamentals of good speaking. There are no burdens on either side.

2) Order and time limits of the debate:

- a. First Pro Constructive: 4 minutes
- b. First Con Constructive: 4 minutes
- c. Crossfire: 3 minutes

(Note: the Con asks the first question; thereafter, either debater can ask questions).

- d. Second Pro: 4 minutes
- e. Second Con: 4 minutes
- f. Crossfire: 3 minutes

(Note: the Pro asks the first question; thereafter, either debater can ask questions).

- g. First Pro Summary: 2 minutes
- h. First Con Summary: 2 minutes
- i. Grand Crossfire: 3 minutes

(Note: one member of the Pro team asks the first question; thereafter, any debater may ask questions).

- j. Second Pro Final Focus: 1 minute
- k. Second Con Final Focus: 1 minute

- l. Prep Time: 2 minutes/team

3) In making the decision, the judges should ask the following questions:

- a. Which team is more persuasive?
- b. Did the debaters back up their assertions with logical thinking and evidence when needed?
- c. Were the debaters fair in their interpretation of the resolution and one another’s statements?
- d. Were the arguments intelligent? Did the debaters try to use many weak arguments instead of a few solid ones?
- e. Did the debaters speak in such a way that their ideas were understandable?
- f. Were the debaters courteous and professional?

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

Page 2

- 4) Judges may not discuss the debate either with each other or with the debaters.
- 5) The Executive Council chooses three possible Public Forum topics at the Winter Meeting. It sends them to an outside expert for refinement and a recommendation. The First Vice President then chooses the topic and has it published, so that it is announced at least 45 days before the Grand National Tournament.
- 6) The judges should distance themselves from the content of the debate. Personal values should not influence the decision.

Section D - General Tournament Regulations

8. The use of computers, electronic storage and retrieval devices, etc is allowed in rounds of Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and Student Congress. They are not allowed in any other event.