

“Canadian National Debating Format”

1. Style

This is the style of debate to be used at the National Debating Championships. Individual provinces are strongly encouraged, but not required, to implement this style at their qualifying events. It is in some ways a cross between Parliamentary Debating and World’s Style Debating.

2. Teams

Each team consists of two people, and the teams are called the “Proposition” and “Opposition”.

Individual speakers are referred to as its First and Second Speakers.

3. Topics

Topics are to be on substantive issues. All motions will start with “This House ...”. No squirreling is permitted.

4. The speaking order is as follows:

First Proposition Speaker - Constructive Speech 8 minutes

First Opposition Speaker - Constructive Speech 8 minutes

Second Proposition Speaker - Constructive Speech 8 minutes

Second Opposition Speaker - Constructive Speech 8 minutes

First Opposition Speaker - Summary/Rebuttal 4 minutes

First Proposition Speaker - Summary/Rebuttal 4 minutes

5. Description of Constructive Speeches

(a) The first proposition speaker has to define the terms, establish the caseline and give the case division (who covers what points). This speaker will normally have two or three

constructive arguments. The first speaker must make the team’s approach crystal clear.

(b) The first opposition speaker must clash with the points just made by the first proposition and advance the caseline, case division and normally the first two arguments of the

opposition side. In World’s Style, this division is usually 2 minutes and 6 minutes, although for our

purposes these are just guidelines. The debater should be evaluated on the overall effectiveness of the speech. Constructive argumentation or refutation may be done first, and once again, the judges will consider the effectiveness of the strategy chosen.

(c) The second proposition speaker has to clash with the case presented by the first opposition

speaker, and should advance one or two more constructive arguments for the proposition. The speaker should also take time to rebuild the proposition case. The arguments must have been announced in the first proposition speech.

(d) The second opposition speaker should also introduce one or two constructive arguments. These new arguments must have been announced in the first opposition speech. This speaker should also take time to clash with the new constructive matter presented by the second proposition, and summarize the opposition case presented. He/she should NOT engage in an overall summary / rebuttal of the debate.

6. Summary / Rebuttal Speeches

The first speaker on each side, starting with the Opposition, will deliver a four minute summary/rebuttal speech. It was decided that there would be no set format for this speech, given the variety of valid strategies and techniques used. In general, speakers should attempt to summarize the key themes or ideas that have taken place in the debate. This speech tries to put the debate in context and explain the 'cruX', or the internal logic of both cases and explains why, on this basis, his/her team has to win. It can examine and summarize the arguments presented, but should focus on the major areas of contention that evolved during the round. This is the final opportunity for a team to convince the judge why his/her team has won the round. During those speeches no new constructive arguments may be introduced except by the proposition debater who is exercising his/her right to reply to new arguments tendered during the final Opposition constructive speech. he/she can not introduce new lines of reasoning. The counter argumentation and counter example (or even counter illustration) must be in 'close and direct' opposition to the opposition points.

7. Points of Information

Points of Information, also known as POIs for short, are used in Worlds Style, plus a variety of other debating forums. Essentially, a POI is a question or statement that one makes while someone is giving a speech as a means of gaining a tactical advantage. It is expected that every speaker offer and accept POIs during the round. POIs are only allowed during the constructive speeches, but not during the first and last minutes of these speeches (called "protected time"). During the round, the moderator will bang the desk after one minute has elapsed to signal that POIs are now allowed, and again with one minute remaining in a speech, to signal that time is once again protected. Points of information should be short and to the point.

To offer a Point of Information, a debater may stand silently, possibly extending an arm. A debater may also simply say "on a point of information", or "on that point". The speaker has control over whether to accept the point. One may not continue with their point of information unless the floor is yielded by the speaker. The speaker may do one of several things:

- a) Reject the point briefly, perhaps by saying something like "no thank you" or "not at this time". The debater who stood on the point will sit down. It is also acceptable for a debater to politely wave down the speaker without verbally rejecting it and disrupting his/her speech.
- b) Accept the point, allow the point of information to be asked, and then proceed to address the point. A speaker may address the point briefly and move on, choose to merge an answer into what they were going to say, or state that they will deal with this later on (in which case be sure you do!)
- c) Say something like "just a second", or "when I finish this point", and then yield the floor when they have finished their sentence or thought.

It is expected that each debater will accept at least two POI's during his/her remarks. Each debater on the opposing team should offer, at least, two POI's to the debater delivering the speech. Adjudicators are instructed to penalize teams if the lower limits are not attained! How well a debater handles themselves in the rough and tumble of offering and accepting POI's is key in this style of debate.

8. Evaluation

The ballot for this style of debate contains the following criteria: Content, Style & Strategy. While points of information do not get marks on their own, they are weighted, perhaps significantly, in a judge's decision. Judges are encouraged to score holistically and award a final score that makes sense in both absolute and relative terms. The win-loss is critical, and judges must weigh this very carefully in their adjudication. For more details, see the adjudicator guide.

9. Standings

The standings are based primarily on win-loss. More details are available in the Constitution.

10. Other Points

Points of clarification, order, points of personal privilege and heckling are all prohibited.