

# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District 9790

## *Ian Murphy Memorial Debating Competition*

### MANUAL OF PROCEDURES

#### 1. General

1.2 A team need not necessarily represent a Secondary School in their sponsor Club's area, nor must a team necessarily be all from the same school. A team may be representing a school, but primarily represents its sponsor Club.

1.3 A team will consist of three students, who must be enrolled school students at the time of each debate.

1.4 There is no restriction upon the number of teams a Club may nominate, but in the event that the Chairman considers that he has too many nominations for the competition in any particular year, preference will be given to Clubs entering only one team, and those nominating more than one may be required to reduce this to one by organizing a preliminary Debate between their nominated teams.

1.5 The competition will be conducted as a "knock-out" draw amongst the teams nominated by the Clubs.

1.6 The competition will commence as soon as is practical after Conference (March/April) in each year and will conclude with the Grand Final at Conference in the following year. The semi-finals will be held as soon as possible after school commences in February with the absolute deadline being two clear weeks before Conference.

1.7 Dead lines for all other rounds will be nominated by the District Debating Chairman, and Clubs are required to adhere to these, or seek an extension from the Chairman. In the event that deadlines are exceeded and no extension is granted, the Chairman may declare a forfeit on behalf of one of the Clubs in that round, or he may declare both Clubs to have forfeited, in which case the Club which would have debated the winner of that round will effectively receive a bye in the following round.

1.8 In the knock-out draw, the team occurring first, or above in each round (i.e. the "top" team), will have the affirmative, except in the semi-finals and final. In those two cases, the District Debating Chairman will make a draw, and the outcome notified with the topics.

It is the responsibility of each Club's debating Director to liaise with his counterpart in the opposing Club and with the Coach of the debating team for each Debate to ensure that there is no ambiguity concerning which team has the affirmative and which team has the negative.

It reflects very badly upon Rotary's organizational skills if two teams arrive, both having prepared the same side of the debate.

1.9 It is the responsibility of the Club sponsoring the "top" team in each round to initiate arrangements for each debate.

If problems arise, the District Debating Chairman should be advised without delay so that matters may be resolved with minimum disruption to the rest of the draw.

1.10 Venues for each debate will be arranged by mutual consent of the two Clubs. In cases where Clubs are far apart, they are encouraged to find a Club at some intermediate location, which is prepared to host the Debate.

1.11 It is the responsibility of each sponsor Club to supply a copy of this manual and a copy of the draw to the school or whoever is responsible for coaching the debating team, so that they are aware of these provisions and can plan accordingly.

1.12 As a general principle, sponsoring Clubs should provide transport for team members and their coach, and pay for their dinners. This applies whether teams are “home” or “away” and may be waived by mutual consent of the Presidents of the two Clubs.

In cases where a third Club is hosting the debate, both visiting Clubs are expected to pay for their respective teams, and the adjudicators.

## **2. Provision of Adjudicators**

2.1 Each of the Clubs is required to provide at least one adjudicator for each debate with preferably an odd number of adjudicators resulting.

2.2 This ruling may be varied only by mutual consent of the two Clubs so that, for example, the “home” Club may be required to provide all adjudicators.

2.3 Where at all possible, adjudicators should be found with the least possible connection with either the sponsor Club or the team. They should certainly not be staff members from the debaters’ school or members of either sponsor club, or their families.

## **3. Conduct of the Debate**

3.1 A lectern should be provided and the teams will sit at either side of it, each provided with a table of adequate size so that notes and reference material may be accommodated. A jug of water and three glasses should also be provided for each team.

3.2 At the commencement of the Debate, the Chairman will announce the topic, the two teams and who will take the affirmative and the negative.

3.3 As each speaker comes to the lectern, the Chairman will introduce him/her, which side they represent and whether they are first, second or third speaker.

3.4 If there is a microphone, the Chairman should adjust it for each speaker. As a general principle, microphones and public address systems should be avoided unless acoustics or other factors render them necessary. This is because many experienced debaters prefer not to have their movements restricted as is necessitated by a microphone.

Notwithstanding the above, microphones will always be necessary at the Grand Final

3.5 Adjudicators mark independently of each other, and should sit apart from each other during the debate so that they cannot see each other’s mark-sheets. Each adjudicator will be provided with a set of marking sheets approved by the District Debating Chairman.

In order to maintain consistency of scores, adjudicators may not use any other marking sheet.

### 3.6 Deleted

3.7 In the case of a result where there is not a unanimous decision amongst the adjudicators, the result will NOT be decided by the summation of their scores.

In such cases, a decision will be reached either by further discussion so that the decision becomes unanimous or if that cannot be reached, then by a majority decision by the adjudicators.

In order for this process to function successfully, even numbers of adjudicators should be avoided, and the Chairman must ensure that the adjudicators are fully aware that the result may not be determined by a simple summation of their scores.

3.8 It is the responsibility of the Club sponsoring the winning team in each debate to inform the District Debating Chairman of the result without delay.

## 4. Marking sheets

4.1 Copies of the marking sheets are enclosed with each draw notification. These replace all previous marking sheets

## 5. Times

5.1 **ALL THREE** debaters on each side will speak for **FOUR** minutes.

5.2 In fairness to all, the Chairman should ensure that a roughly equal interval be allowed between debaters, and that this interval should be at least one and a half minutes. This is to allow adequate and equal opportunity for teams to prepare rebuttal.

5.3 Timekeepers will give a **SINGLE** warning bell at **THREE** minutes and **TWO BELLS** at **FOUR** minutes. These should be struck firmly and immediately damped so that the speaker, and the adjudicators have no difficulty in hearing them, while at the same time providing a minimum of disruption to the speaker's delivery.

5.4 Timekeepers should prepare a report for the adjudicators showing the speaking time of each speaker. This is particularly important in the case of debaters who finish short, since the adjudicators will not usually be aware of how much they were short.

## 6. Props

6.1 The only material, which may be used in the debate, are notes, dictionaries, documents and other references such as Newspaper cuttings, etc, which are to be tabled. No other props are permitted.

PP Jim Maden  
April 1991

Revised: Gordon Ferguson  
August 2000 (Section 3.5)

Revised: Bill Whitehead  
May 2008 (Sections 1.3, 3.6 and 5.1)