

Notes for New Club Debating Coordinators

Ian Murphy Memorial Debating Competition

The purpose of these notes is to emphasise a few points that may not be immediately obvious to a new Rotary Club Debating Coordinator (RCDC).

- The first thing that you need to understand is that you, as the RCDC, are the only contact between Rotary and your debating team. The District debating chairman does not have any contact with individual teams, their schools or the coaches.
- At the earliest possible time you need to establish a good working relationship with the coach of the team that your club is sponsoring. This includes making sure that you have all the contact details, - phone numbers and email address – for the coach, and that you in turn provide the coach with your own contact details.
- On receipt of the package with the coloured face sheet, give one copy to the coach of each team that you are sponsoring and retain one yourself.
- As soon as possible you need to produce or acquire a list of suitable adjudicators because it is part of your role to provide adjudicators for each debate, (except the final held in conjunction with the Rotary District Conference). The previous RCDC in your club will be able to provide a list of names and contact details. Failing that, you will need to use your own initiative to compile your own list. Some possibilities include members of debating groups or public speaking clubs such as Rostrum and Toastmasters, coaches of debating in other schools, prominent citizens etc. It is important to note that debating is not public speaking, and that it has a special set of protocols. Because of this you need to ensure that the adjudicators you choose are familiar with debating as distinct from public speaking. The coach of your own school may be able to suggest suitable adjudicators.

There is an excellent publication called *Taking the Initiative: A Guide to Debating and Public Speaking* produced by the NSW Education Department that can be downloaded from <https://www.artsunit.nsw.edu.au/speaking-competitions/debating/debating-and-public-speaking-resources>. In some cases it would be wise to suggest to some potential adjudicators that they read that publication. There is also a more concise summary of the principles of adjudication in this package, called Notes for Adjudicators.

- Note the dates for completion of each round in the letter at the front of the package.
- It is the responsibility of the “top” team in the draw to make all arrangements (para 1.8 in the Manual of Procedures). This club is deemed to be the host club and has to:
 - Initiative contact with the other Rotary club
 - Come to a mutually satisfactory arrangement with the other club as to the venue, date and time for a particular debate. Most often the venue will be host club, but for widely spaced clubs another location mid-way between the clubs may be chosen.
 - Organise two of the three adjudicators. The third adjudicator is of course organised by the non-host club.
 - The host club is responsible for supplying 3 sets of adjudication sheets for the adjudicators.
 - The host club should have a stop watch available for each debate, and organise a time-keeper to record the times for later examination by the adjudicators. Most mobile phones can be used as a stop-watch provided that they are tested before the event.
- Make sure that your school is debating the correct side (affirmative or negative) as per para 1.8 in the Manual of Procedures
- Thank you for undertaking the role of debating coordinator for your club. If you plan ahead you will find that it is not a difficult task, but one that is very satisfying.

For any enquiries, please contact:

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