

## LINCOLN DOUGLAS DEBATE RULES (Includes Section 1002 of the C&CR)

- (a) THE CONTEST. Lincoln Douglas debate provides excellent training for development of skills in argumentation, persuasion, research and audience analysis.
- (1) *Purpose.* Lincoln Douglas debate is an oral one-on-one argumentation in which debaters attempt to convince the judge of the acceptability of their side of a proposition with a communicative style of delivery. One debater shall argue the affirmative side of the resolution, and one debater shall argue the negative side of the resolution in a given round.
  - (2) *Format.* Round robin or multiple preliminary rounds leading to an elimination bracket. Each round is approximately 40 minutes. One debater shall argue the affirmative side of the value resolution, and one debater shall argue the negative side of the value resolution in a given round. Each debater will argue both sides of the resolution within the tournament format.
- (b) ENTRIES.
- (1) Representation. The debates shall be conducted in one division in each conference. In all conferences, a school may enter three individuals in its district meet. In districts where fewer than a total of eight debaters are competing, each school with a full entry may enter a fourth debater.
  - (2) Eligibility. The student may not enter more than two speech events; and when entered in Lincoln Douglas, the second speech event may not be team debate, prose or poetry. There is no restriction on entering Congress in addition to other speech events. See Section 1000 of the C&CR.
  - (3) Substitutions. During the district meet, substitutions shall not be allowed after a given tournament has begun. Substitutions shall not be allowed after the district meet.
  - (4) Failure to Compete at District. Disqualification from the Lincoln Douglas Debate Contest for the current academic year may result if an academic coach fails to notify the district contest director, in a timely manner prior to the meet, that a debater will not compete and such may be grounds for suspension from Lincoln Douglas debate for the following year.
  - (5) Alternates. When a debater who qualified for the next higher meet cannot participate in the next higher meet, the alternate should be notified. A coach or designee who fails to notify the regional and/or state contest directors that a student will not compete is in violation of the Academic Contest Ethics Code and the school shall be disqualified from Lincoln Douglas debate for the current academic competition, and such violations may be grounds for suspension from Lincoln Douglas debate for the following year.
- (c) THE LINCOLN DOUGLAS DEBATE RESOLUTION. Two topics for debate, one for fall and one for spring, provided by the UIL office, shall be posted during the course of the school year on the UIL website.
- (d) FORMAT AND TIME LIMITATIONS. Continuous speaking time and order of speeches shall be as follows:

Constructive

Affirmative, six minutes

Cross-examination by negative, three minutes

Negative, seven minutes

Cross-examination by affirmative, three minutes

Rebuttal

Affirmative, four minutes

Negative, six minutes

Affirmative, three minutes

- (1) Preparation Time. A maximum of four minutes of preparation time per debater is allowed during the course of the debate.
  - (2) Overtime. Overtime may count against a team at the discretion of the judge.
  - (3) Abuse of Time. Excessive abuse of the time allotments may result in disqualification at the discretion of the contest director.
- (e) DELIVERY. Communication with the audience is to be considered a high priority for UIL debaters. Oral delivery in Lincoln Douglas debate is to be communicative and persuasive.
- (f) EVIDENCE.
- (1) Use. Supporting evidence adds to the persuasiveness of the reasoning and argumentation of the debate. Whenever a debater quotes at any length the words of another, the fact the evidence is quoted material should be plainly stated.
  - (2) Availability of Materials. Speakers may use notes if they wish. If charts, maps, books, or other materials are used by any debater, they shall be left before the audience and shall be available for use by the opposing debaters in refutation. Debaters may use laptop computers in the round in accordance with the rules published in the *UIL Lincoln Douglas Debate Handbook* and other official UIL publications available through the League office and on the UIL website. Coaches are responsible for reviewing these rules in advance of the contest.
  - (3) Available in Writing on Demand. All participants submitting evidence in competition shall do so orally and possess and present promptly upon demand of debater such evidence in printed form or digital storage. The evidence shall display full bibliographic source citation, even if the full citation is not orally delivered. Full citation should include the following elements: author's name, author's qualifications, complete source information, complete date and page number. Citations of online publications or from online data bases also require the publication medium (online), the Internet URL, or the name of the computer service. Failure to meet this requirement can, at the discretion of the judge and contest director, result in:
    - (A) loss of round,
    - (B) the evidence not being counted in the round, or
    - (C) the evidence not being given as much weight in the decision of the round.
  - (4) The contest director shall be empowered with the final decision in questions concerning falsification of evidence. See (i) (7).
- (g) CROSS-EXAMINATION PERIOD. During the questioning period, both opponents shall stand and face the judge. The questioner should control the use of time during the period and may only ask questions. Questioners may not comment on the answers or make any statements of their own views during the cross-examination period. The purpose of the questioning period is to:
- (1) Ask for information to gain clarification and understanding.
  - (2) Set up strategies to use in developing further argumentation.
  - (3) Discover fallacies or inconsistencies in opponent's argumentation.
- (h) SCOUTING.
- (1) Debates Shall Be Public. Debate, by its very nature, is public. Therefore, all debates in League district, regional and state competition shall be open to the public, with the exception of debaters competing in that tournament. Competing debaters shall not observe rounds of district, region, or state competition in which they are not debating.
  - (2) Notes. With the exception of the final debate in district, regional and state competition, only the judge and the two student participants shall take notes. For example, anyone may take notes in the debates which determine first through fourth place. See Section 1000 (c) of the *C&CR* regarding taping and filming.

- (3) Sharing of Notes. During a tournament, participants or judges may not give or accept notes taken during that tournament. For example, a judge or a debater participating in the district contest is neither allowed to give nor accept notes regarding any rounds in that tournament from anyone else during that tournament.
- (4) Penalty for Debaters. Violation by debaters of the scouting rule is grounds for disqualification of the debater from the current competition. The contest director shall be empowered with the final decision in questions concerning scouting. Such violations may be grounds for suspension of the school from Lincoln Douglas debate for the following year.
- (5) Penalty for Coaches. Violation by coaches of the scouting rule is grounds for disqualification of their debaters from the current competition. Coaches who violate scouting rules will also be subject to the full range of penalties as outlined in Sections 27 and 29 of the *C&CR*, and such violations may be grounds for suspension of the school from Lincoln-Douglas debate for the following year.

(i) TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES.

- (1) District Planning Meeting. The contest director is urged to hold a preliminary planning meeting with the Lincoln Douglas coaches in the district in advance of the organizing date for district contests. Recommendations from this meeting concerning site, judging, tournament format, bracketing and other contest procedures should be made to the district director. Suggested meeting agenda is located on the UIL website debate page.
- (2) Eliminations.
  - (A) Debaters should be paired by the tournament director, who should try to prevent, where possible, debaters from the same school, district, or region from meeting except in power-matched preliminary rounds or elimination rounds. Debaters shall debate in their assigned pairings.
  - (B) At the district meet, the championship may be decided at the discretion of the district executive committee, by round robin or preliminary rounds leading to an elimination bracket where all undefeated contestants shall be placed into the elimination bracket. All places (first through sixth) shall be determined. No ties shall be awarded. First, second and third place shall advance to the next level of competition. Fourth place shall be designated as first alternate. The highest seeds eliminated in the quarterfinal round, or the fifth and sixth seed after preliminary competition, depending on the tournament format determined by the district executive committee, shall be designated as second and third alternates for advancement purposes.
  - (C) At the regional meet, the championship shall be determined by preliminary rounds leading to an elimination bracket, where all undefeated contestants shall be placed into the elimination bracket. First through sixth place shall be determined. No ties shall be awarded. First, second and third places shall advance to the next level of competition. Fourth place shall be designated as first alternate. The highest seeds eliminated in the quarterfinal round shall be designated as second and third alternates for advancement purposes.
  - (D) At the State Meet, the tournament format will be structured to allow for three preliminary rounds for the purpose of seeding for the semifinal round. Those advancing to the semifinal round will be announced after the completion of the third preliminary round. Brackets are not broken at the State Meet. First and second place shall debate for medals. Debaters who refuse to debate in semifinal or final rounds at the State Meet shall be disqualified from the tournament and such violations may be grounds for suspension from LD debate for the following year. Both semifinalists will be awarded bronze medals. Debaters designated as fifth and sixth place will be awarded medals.
- (3) Choice of Sides. If possible, each student should debate both the affirmative side and the negative side of the resolution during the course of the meet. For example, in a three-preliminary round tournament each student should debate affirmative one round, negative one round, and then flip a coin or come to a mutual agreement for a third round.
- (4) Judges. Judges shall be selected in odd numbers (1, 3, 5) for each debate. Judges should be:
  - (A) selected on the basis of capability, impartiality and willingness to judge according to UIL standards;
  - (B) at minimum, be high school graduates;
  - (C) instructed to sit apart during the debate;
  - (D) instructed not to discuss their decisions with other individuals or judges while judging a given debate;

- (E) provided with adequate instructions for using the judging criteria for Lincoln-Douglas debate in the UIL program; and
- (F) instructed to direct questions concerning tournament procedure, or other questions to the contest director.
  - (i) District. Judges for the district meet shall be chosen by the contest director subject to the approval of the district executive committee.
  - (ii) Regional. Judges for regional meets shall be selected by the regional Lincoln Douglas debate contest director.
  - (iii) State. Judges for the State Meet shall be selected by the state contest director. Any school that qualifies for the State Meet shall provide an experienced judge for each debater who qualifies for the state competition, unless excused for a valid reason by the contest director. Schools qualifying more than one debater should contact the State Director immediately following regional competition. State judging forms should be entered online following the regional contest by the deadline posted on the UIL website. Unless excused for a valid reason by the contest director, schools which advance to elimination rounds shall provide an experienced judge for each advancing debater who will be available until dismissed by the contest director. Failure to provide a judge could constitute grounds for forfeiture of the round. The contest director is empowered to determine if forfeiture of a round is necessary.
  - (iv) Schools Represented Not to be Known by the Judges. Except at State Meet, so far as possible, the judges should not know which school a debater represents. On the ballot, the contestant is to be designated as the affirmative or the negative or by number.
  - (v) Instructions to the Judge. The contest director is charged with the responsibility of enforcing instructions given on the Lincoln-Douglas debate ballot, and only the most flagrant delinquency in this matter will be considered grounds for question.
- (5) Interruptions. The contest director should permit no interruption of a speaker from the audience during a debate. No cheering shall be permitted during the debate. Any intentional interruption of a debate by an audience member is considered unethical behavior.
- (6) Timekeeper and Signal Standards. The timekeeper should announce to the debaters prior to the contest the types of time signals to be used. Either time cards, hand signals or automatic timers may be used.
  - (A) If hand signals or time cards are used, the time remaining should be indicated.
  - (B) When a speaker uses all of the allotted time, in either the constructive or rebuttal speeches, the timekeeper should so indicate.
  - (C) A timekeeper is provided for convenience. The primary responsibility for staying within the time limits lies with the debater.
  - (D) Overtime may count against the debater at the discretion of the judge.
  - (E) Excessive abuse of the time allotments may result in disqualification at the discretion of the contest director.
- (7) Questions.
  - (A) Questions shall be directed to the contest director before the official decision of the judges is announced. The decision of the meet officials in these matters is final. No arguments with the judges will be permitted.
  - (B) Excessive abuse by either the contestant or the coach shall be reason for disqualification of that school and its contestant for the current competition and may be grounds for suspension for the following year.

- (8) **Ballot Verification.** Unofficial results of those advancing to elimination rounds may be announced prior to ballot verification. Ballots should be returned to contestants or coaches to be checked for possible tabulation errors before official results of those advancing are announced. A student and/or coach not present for the ballot verification period forfeits the opportunity to verify tabulation. Approximately 15 minutes should be allotted for this verification period. This is designed as a time to verify tabulation, not a time to question the decision of the judges.
- (9) **Official Results.** At the end of the ballot verification period, results shall be read as official results. No questions may be raised after this point.
- (j) **RECORDING.** Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video) speech contests. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.



### **UIL Guidelines: Electronic Retrieval Devices in CX and LD Debate**

Electronic retrieval devices are defined as laptop and tablet computers, netbook computers, and other portable electronic retrieval devices. The use of electronic retrieval devices by competitors in UIL Cross-Examination Debate and Lincoln Douglas Debate rounds is permissible under the conditions specified below.

- A. Internet access may be used to retrieve files, research arguments, and exchange evidence and/or arguments with the opposing team and judge.
- B. Computers or other electronic retrieval devices may neither be used to communicate nor to send or receive information to or from coaches, assistants or other individuals inside or outside the room in which the competition occurs. Examples of information that would be restricted would include *but not be limited to* coach/non-participating competitor generated arguments, advice or arguments to run, questions to ask or response answers during cross-examination period and other information not generated by the participating competitors in the round.
- C. In compliance with the UIL prompting rule, electronic retrieval devices may not be used to send messages or evidence to a debate partner while that partner is speaking or participating in cross-examination period.
- D. **Availability of Evidence:** Debaters have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. This may be done electronically by flash drive or email chain if the opponent and judge have the capability to view the electronic version on their own devices. In the event that an opponent or judge is not using an electronic retrieval device, a debater who presents evidence from an electronic device must provide a meaningful opportunity for that opponent or judge to review evidence. Examples of such access include providing a printed copy of the evidence and showing the evidence on a device provided by the debater. Whatever manner the evidence or access is provided, the evidence must be quickly and easily accessible by the opposing team and judge.
- E. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, internet connection, batteries, extension cords and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts shall not be responsible for providing wi-fi connection, computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants or any technical assistance.
- F. **Sanction:** Contestants found to have violated paragraph C above shall forfeit the round of competition and receive zero points. Contestants found to have violated paragraph B above shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds. Contest Directors shall be empowered with the final decision concerning disqualification.

Contestants choosing to use laptop computers or other electronic retrieval devices defined above accept the risk of equipment failure. No special consideration or accommodations, including no additional prep time or speech time, will be given by judges, contest directors or tournament hosts should equipment failure occur.

By choosing to use these devices in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking. Laptops or other electronic retrieval devices should not be a deterrent to eye contact and other proper public speaking skills.

2024-2025