

## DEBATES: HOW THEY ARE JUDGED

## A SYMPOSIUM

And so the judge, after carefully weighing all the issues involved, made his decision.....

And so the judge, after listening to the speakers who impressed him the most, made his decision.....

And so the judge, after remembering how many times the coach of the teams involved in the debate he was hearing had voted against his teams, made his decision.....

And so the judge, after flipping a coin, made his decision....

How are debates judged? Are there significant differences, or is there a common agreement concerning decision-making? The Journal has solicited and received position papers from several debate coaches in the state of Tennessee answering the question: How do you arrive at your decision in a debate round as a judge? The following pages present their responses. We welcome any reaction papers any readers may have to these articles, including ones from debaters who may have wondered from time to time how they were judged.

Randy Fisher

With panels of three or five judges in the elimination rounds of most debate tournaments, "split" decisions are far from uncommon; this phenomenon does not necessarily represent differences in judging "philosophy." It may more likely

only suggest differences in what was heard, or how arguments were interpreted or weighted. In fact, since I know but one way to judge a debate, I assume everybody else judges the same way. (I offer that statement without any irony or satire intended.) Some judges frown more or less over the careless documentation of sources of evidence; some of us squirm more in response to shrill screams uttered in rebuttal at 235 words per minute; some of us rate debaters from 0 to 30 while others may have narrowed those margins; some judges (like myself) seldom ask to examine evidence after the debate is over because we believe debaters should clarify and apply data in the debate if it is to be given credence; and, there are even some judges (like myself) egocentric enough to believe we can keep an accurate record of all necessary and important bases for decision in a debate without a full stenographic account of every word uttered. These are differences and many other similar ones can be found but I honestly doubt that they are more than mechanistic differences between judges and do not provide for significant differences in how judgment is rendered.

As new jargon is found for argumentative techniques, new questions are asked about methods of judging, but, again, I doubt that important differences really exist. For example: Is debate a comparison of policy options or a test of hypotheses? (As I perceive it, it would not affect the basis for judgment.) Can a negative team win without any disadvantage offered or

standing? (Of course, if at the end of the debate it has shown no need exists for change or if it has demonstrated that the affirmative plan won't really lead to beneficial results as claimed.) Is falsifying evidence sufficient reason for either team to lose? (Of course.) Can the negative win if it demonstrates that the affirmative plan of implementing the proposition lies outside the framework of the resolution? (Of course. And I have never heard any judge of debate ever say otherwise.) Do you give weight to turnarounds? Or to upsidedowns? Or to Mickey Mouse? (Who cares--we judge the debate as a whole and sometimes these things add weight to affirmative or negative claims and some times they do not.)

In competitive debate the affirmative team advocates change. To win it must demonstrate a need (significant reason) for that change (the elimination of damage or severe threats of damage to important consensus values like freedom or justice or to more concrete matters like life, health, economic status); the affirmative must prove that the proposed change will work (it can be implemented, enforced, and will do what is claimed for it); and, finally, the affirmative must show that the benefits of change are not outweighed by offsetting ill effects greater than benefits gained. Judgment of debate proceeds through a series of paired comparisons in which the affirmative team argues that its evidence is valid and sufficient and applicable and in which the negative team contends that the evidence is inapplicable or invalid or insufficient or outweighed by other data. After

each initial line of argument has been explored and tested through a series of extensions, a decision is rendered. If satisfactory reason for change still exists, its workability claims have withstood attack and if disadvantages are outweighed or have been refuted--the affirmative wins.

Judges may differ in opinions on which arguments withstood attack but I honestly doubt they have differences in judging "philosophy." Good judgment demands expertise, careful methods of receiving and assimilating, the ability to put aside pre-judgments et cetera--but its basis really offers no mystery. I apologize if I'm ignorant or naive.

Richard Dean

True to its argumentative tradition, the forensics community has been characterized by controversy since Protagoras of Abdera decided that every question has at least two sides. Modern "debates about debating" have been concerned with two major questions: who should judge debates and by what criteria should debates be judged? This brief article is concerned with the latter, but some of the major controversies arising from the "who of debate judging should be noted. Such disputes have centered around these questions: should the judge be a layman acting as a juror;<sup>1</sup> an expert in the subject of the debate;<sup>2</sup> an experienced debate coach or should students judge each other through peer evaluation?<sup>4</sup> Each school has its proponents, but the use of the professional debate coach



is the system presently most in vogue. As the venerable American Forensic Association states, "Contests should be judged only by persons competent in speech evaluation."<sup>5</sup>

Quintilian described the ideal speaker as "a good man speaking well." Perhaps the ideal debate judge could be described as "a wise man judging with something akin to divine infallibility"--i.e., speaking ex cathedra with the collective wisdom of Aristotle, St. Thomas, Perelman, Stephen Toulmin, et al. Since such paragons of logical decision-making are usually in short supply, the tournament director must use what he can get. But judging from student feedback, the use of debate coaches as critic/judges is reasonably satisfactory--especially when said students have won!

And now to the second area of greatest controversy in debate judging. Exactly how should a judge determine his decision? Here again, polemics abound. One of the oldest arguments on this subject, and one that still continues in some quarters, concerns the "skills" vs. "issues" question. Two early coaches, James M. O'Neill and Hugh N. Wells engaged in a two year battle in the pages of the Quarterly Journal of Speech<sup>6</sup> over this problem. O'Neill argued that the debaters should be judged on the basis of the forensic skills they displayed, i.e., delivery, organization, refutation, etc. Wells maintained that skills could not be separated from the arguments themselves; he contended that it was debating skill that gave

force to argument. Today the "issues" approach is the preferred method of judging. However, it may be logically argued that the "skills vs. issues" controversy is actually in the same category with the "chicken vs. egg" argument, or the "immovable object vs. the irresistible force" controversy. We cannot have one without the other in meaningful discourse. Therefore, we cannot consider one in an oral contest without considering the other. The whole controversy is reminiscent of the "faith vs. works" dispute in the early Christian church. The apostle James wrote, "Faith without works is dead. . . I will show you my faith by my works." Thus, to use a scriptural phrase, the debater shows us his skills by his arguments and lends force to his arguments by his skills. And these skills are generally considered to be those listed on the Form "C" Ballot of the American Forensic Association, namely: analysis, reasoning, evidence, organization, refutation and delivery. Each should be carefully evaluated by the judge in relationship to its use by the debaters in presenting the issues of the debate.

When considering the issues of the debate, the judge must include two types: stock issues that are common to every debate, and the issues arising from the specific contest at hand.

Michael Sproule lists the former as follows:

1. Is there a need for a change?
2. Can the plan meet the need?
3. Are there disadvantages to the plan?
4. Is the need significant and inherent in the present system?
5. Is the plan practical and workable?
6. Do the case and plan implement the resolution or are they outside the sphere of the resolution?
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The second type of issues inheres in the debate itself. For example, if the affirmative contends that the plan advocated will be superior to the status quo as in providing medical care for all citizens, this contention becomes an issue in the debate. The negative will be judged on its attack of the issue and the affirmative on its defense. As Sproule states,

The duty of the affirmative is to justify change via a prima facie case. This requires the affirmative to undertake a burden of proof to demonstrate that their case and plan are viable in terms of the stock issues. The negative's duty to uphold presumption and refute the affirmative requires them to be mindful of the stock and particular issues in the debate. . . the issues approach accords well with common sense. Why would anyone adopt a proposal that was unnecessary, failed to solve the problem or created worse problems than it solved.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the critic/judge of a debate should be willing to state his reasons for the decision he renders, either orally or in a written critique. As Austin Freeley writes, "Judges of educational debates have two functions: One, they must discern which team did the better debating; two, they must report their decisions in an educationally useful manner."<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Cripe puts it this way,

Because of the contest aspect of the debate, there is a tendency to place considerable emphasis on the decision. Actually who won should be of momentary importance to the teams and of even less importance to the judge. The truly important point is why one side won. The competent judge should clearly understand the reasons for his decision, and should be able to explain them with equal clarity. . . He should be constantly striving to make himself a better critic judge.<sup>10</sup>

Over half a century ago, Lew Sarett, poet, professor and debate authority par excellence wrote, "Who of us has not suffered, or imagined that he suffered from the decisions of incompetent, in-expert judges?"<sup>11</sup> We have not reached utopia today in the debate community, but if the advice of the writers quoted in this article is heeded, we will surely be on our way towards better decisions. We may never arrive at instant omniscience, but we can at least hope for reasonable verdicts.

Helen White

Judging a debate requires three things: objectivity, knowledge of debating principles and the topic, and the ability and willingness to follow the debate closely. These are the standards I try to apply in my judging assignments.

First, I look at the case itself. Major issues must be defined and pertinent to the topic. The type of case, whether prima facie or comparative advantage, should be evident. The contentions must be valid, clearly stated, and supported by current and scholarly evidence, as opposed to a spattering of quotes from Time and US News & World Report. The affirmative debaters should be very familiar with the case and should not be trying to deal with one that has been researched and prepared by someone else. (I have judged rounds in which the first affirmative speaker could not even pronounce fairly simple words or names contained within his prepared speech.)

In regard to the negative team and its responsibilities pertaining to the case, I expect it to point out the weaknesses and to focus on the substantive issues, rather than trivial points. If the negative team cannot detect the flaws in the affirmative presentation, then I do not penalize the affirmative side for them.

Next, I pay close heed to the reasoning and logic evidenced by the teams. Premises and the conclusions drawn from them must be logical, pertinent, and adequate. One isolated incident does not "prove" a contention. Also, I determine if the analysis is being related to specific points; often, the debater is just rambling. "Canned shotgun" rebuttals are an abomination, as are labels such as "topicality" or "inherency" if the debater cannot relate specifics to this arguments.

Closely related to reasoning is the use of supporting evidence. Here I look for relevancy, objectivity, and substance. The practice of fabricating or removing from context "helpful" evidence is perhaps the darkest cloud in academic debate. A judge has a responsibility to ferret out this practice and to penalize by forfeit the offenders.

A well-organized presentation is one of my favorite things, for it makes following the debate so much easier. All my attention can be directed to what is being said. For the first affirmative speaker, organization is usually no problem; however, if the negative speakers can follow

the established organizational pattern, then their arguments are more effective and more to the point. I dislike having to keep a flow chart that resembles a temperature chart of a patient severely afflicted with a case of the chills and fever.

The delivery and style of the debaters do not weigh nearly as heavily with me as the factors already discussed. Nevertheless, I do have some pet peeves in this regard. I dislike for debaters to tell me how to flow an argument across or how to award the decision. Smart aleck debaters with condescending attitudes toward weaker teams affect me negatively. Rudeness, whether it be in the form of loud "whispering," smirks, or affecting boredom, is something I find difficult to tolerate and is a factor in my decision if the debate is close. Those debaters who fight hard but fairly, and who know and accept the fact that a judge may not always choose as they would have liked are really fun to judge.

In the final analysis, however, my decision rests on the content of the debate rather than the personalities of the debaters. The majority of these students work too hard to have their efforts nullified by biased, ignorant, irresponsible judges. Moreover, the future of academic debate depends upon competent, knowledgeable, and objective coaches and judges.

Jim Holm

Traditionally, there have been two competing methods of  
judging debates. The first method is to decide who won the

debate on the basis of who won the key issues; the second, to decide on the basis of who did the better job of debating. I prefer the second method because I believe it produces more equitable decisions. In the next few paragraphs, I shall try to illustrate this point with some examples from a recent tournament I attended.

Early in the tournament, I observed a negative team which used "spread tactics" to answer the affirmative arguments. Typical of spread tactics, the negative arguments in this case were too numerous to be well developed and too numerous to all be answered with an equal amount of attention. On the ballot, the judge awarded the decision to the negative because "although the affirmative were obviously the better debaters (8 points better in speaker points), the negative raised so many plan attacks that the affirmative did not have time to answer them all." 13

Later in the tournament, I judged an affirmative team which raised two major contentions: "1) that organized crime puts the squeeze on America; and 2) that (our team) will put the squeeze on Organized Crime." In my opinion, the wording of these contentions was sufficiently vague enough to allow the affirmative to shift its interpretation of the contentions while answering negative attacks. While I thought this an extremely poor tactic on the part of the affirmative, most judges evidently did not for my decision was the only loss that case received in eight affirmative rounds of debate.

Finally, I sat in on a round in which two better-than-average affirmative debaters competed against one good and



one very poor negative debater. Although the affirmative team earned more speaker points than the negative, the good negative debater according to the judge did manage to refute the cause-effect relationship on which the affirmative based its case and, thus, won the decision.

Each of these illustrations tends to confirm the trend noted by J. Michael Sproule toward judging on the basis of issues rather than on skills--a trend which I believe is going in the wrong direction.<sup>14</sup> In my opinion decisions should not be awarded on the basis of who talks the fastest or the trickiest, nor even on the basis of who legitimately wins one key issue. Decisions should instead be awarded on the basis of which team of debaters demonstrates the greatest clarity of organization, precision in the choice of language, incisiveness in analysis of issues, coherence in the drawing of conclusions from evidence, and articulateness in presentation.

There is little doubt that judging on issues is easier than judging on skills, and usually more widely understood and appreciated by debaters.<sup>15</sup> But judging on issues emphasizes the end results at the expense of the means or methods of achieving such results. Hence judging on issues obscures the process of decision-making. If debate, as an intercollegiate activity, is substantively ever to be more than a verbal trackmeet or a mental football game, then those of us who coach and judge debate must refocus our critical attention on the processes by which arguments are developed,

realizing that to the degree those processes are properly adhered to the long-term results will be valid and reliable.

Verna Ruth Abbott

As a debate judge, I am concerned with judging the evidence, the reasoning, and the presentation. The affirmative side carries the burden of proof and must convince the judge with sufficient support for its argument. The negative side must convince the judge with the refutation of the opponent's argument. With this as a basis, I listen for logical, clear reasoning, presented in a well-organized, persuasive manner. I put great emphasis on delivery and how well the debater communicates his thesis and supportive ideas.

It is my observation that many debaters become so involved with their material and proof, trying to overwhelm the judge with a mass of material, they neglect the communication of their ideas and mar their presentation with sloppy delivery, too rapid a pace, and poor articulation. No matter how in-depth the research, or how sound the documentation of proof, if the judge cannot understand what the debater is saying, the debater cannot convince the judge of the validity and soundness of his viewpoint. My final decision as judge is based on the fundamental question: which side persuaded me to accept their stand on the proposition?

## Jim Brooks

Given my own fondness for inconsistency - even wild hairiness, I am suspicious of all formal decision-making policy statements, including and especially mine. The more debates that I hear, the fewer a priori positions I defend. As a matter of fact, one of the things I enjoy most about current academic debating practice is the dynamic nature of decision-making theory. Nothing that follows then should be considered a personal absolute; everything below to the contrary notwithstanding, I will use any decision-making model (system? position? eccentricity?) in a particular round that is persuasively forced upon me, or that is presented and defended by one team, and unchallenged or agreed to by the other. In the final analysis, I believe that debate decision-making theory is debatable (as is everything else), and, alas, I will listen to anything. For anyone who might still be interested in my current thinking on debate decision-making, read on.

In various debates, I have been persuaded to resolve the issues by every known and unknown theoretical system - including, in at least one instance, awarding the debate to the team most willing to renounce totally the policy position it defended in constructives. Still, there are two approaches to decision-making that I am most comfortable with. The one theory that I find less preferable but nonetheless useful might be called the traditional stock issues model. This places heavy burdens on the affirmative team. Negative debaters may argue practically

anything short of either inherency/plan attack contradictions or evidential contradictions. Presumption and the unknown risk in change weigh heavily for the negative. Negative argumentation may contain direct refutation, numerous inherency challenges, defenses of the solvency potential of many status quo mechanisms, a liberal number of minor repairs, and the full range of solvency and disadvantage arguments. To win the debate, the negative team need only defeat one of three major issues: the need or justification for change, the plan solvency, the superiority of plan advantages over potential disadvantages.

My major objection to the stock issues approach to decision-making is that this model does not necessarily force the negative to take a policy position stand -- other than perhaps a stand against the resolution in general. I find this approach even more objectionable when it is extended by the negative team to the position that has become known as hypothesis testing. My understanding of the hypothesis testing decision-making model is that it is based on the idea that real-world decision-making often involves the consideration of multiple alternative approaches to solving a problem; that the negative team may not only argue all the traditional stock issue positions but may also introduce in theory at least an unlimited number of policy alternatives (counter-plans); and that the only absolute position that the negative team needs to take is one that denies the resolution which is the hypothesis being tested. I suppose hypothesis testing is theoretically sound and I am certain that real-world decision-making profits from the consideration of

multiple alternatives to solving problems - especially since the real world has forever, instead of seventy-two minutes excluding preparation time. I am equally certain that the time constraints of the academic debate format do not permit intelligent consideration of limitless negative argumentation including numerous thirty-second counter-plans. However, I do believe that academic debate should reflect real-world decision-making with policy comparisons. But this must be done within the time constraints of the debate format if intelligent decisions are to be made by admittedly dull judges such as myself. Moreover, the advocates in academic debate should have some consistent commitment throughout the debate to the policy alternative they defend. And that leads me to the second and more preferable decision-making model.

I prefer that debaters place me in the position of choosing between (not among) competing policy systems dealing with a single problem area. The negative policy system may be more implicit than explicit; still, I prefer the negative clearly outline and defend a specific, coordinated policy system throughout the debate. Each team may defend one policy system. I will vote for the better policy system, or the one that is shown on balance to be more advantageous. Presumption will lie with the system that has the greatest known factors; i. e., the present system. If the negative team wishes to propose a new policy system, they should expect to lose all claim to presumption and to accept the same degree of risk accepted by the affirmative. In other words, I do not like conditional counter-plans.

My biases toward counter-plan debating are based in traditional theory. I look for the policy that better solves the problem first isolated by the affirmative. If the affirmative plan requires enormous resources relative to available resources, this should serve as the basis of several categories of disadvantage arguments; this should not serve as grounds for a competitiveness position to justify a counter-plan dealing with a new problem area. If solving the problem with the affirmative plan would require so much of available resources so as to preclude normal governmental consideration for solving other pressing national problems, the negative should contend that the problem does not merit the solution; i.e., that the plan is not cost beneficial. My preferred role as a decision maker in academic debate then is one of a chooser between policy systems, with each team restricted to defending one policy system each dealing with the same problem area.

I would like to add brief comments on two other important concepts that often have impact on my decisions. First, I believe that topicality is an important issue in current academic debate and one that, for obvious theoretical reasons, can take precedence over all other issues in any particular debate. However, I do not believe in the spirit of the resolution, nor do I believe that any affirmative team or negative team or any judge or any group of judges has any special revelation about the true meaning of any resolution. The meaning of any resolution can most often be best sought

through the contextual history that deals with the problem area that the resolution appears to focus on. Still, in that language and thought and problems are all dynamic in nature, there can never be an absolute topicality determination and the issue of topicality is always debatable. Secondly, I would like to comment on disadvantage argumentation. Unproven, undocumented, but extraordinarily reasonable disadvantages may not win a ballot by themselves, but they do significantly increase the negative presumption when I am judging the debate. On the other hand, I am unconvinced by contrived, though heavily documented, disadvantages that wander through endless, tenuous casual links finally to arrive at a harm.

Those readers who are still with me at this point in this essay have an obvious, though inexplicable, interest in how I judge debates. It will be your burden to resolve finally the vicious rumors about my flipping a coin. But before you commit yourself to my defense, perhaps you should return to near the beginning of this statement and re-read sentence one in paragraph two.

Kenneth Schott

Debate is the most complex of all the forensic events and makes the greatest demands on the judge. Every debate judge needs a knowledge of the fundamentals of debating, a knowledge of the topic being debated, some personal experience in competitive debate, and a consistent set of criteria for evaluating debate.



The old A. F. A. Debate Ballot (Form C) lists six criteria for debate evaluation: analysis, reasoning, evidence, organization, refutation, and delivery. Each category was designed to receive equal weight in the judge's decision. Unfortunately, such objectivity is impossible even with such a highly structured instrument as the "Form C" Debate Ballot. Some judges give a disproportionate amount of weight to analysis; others make their decision primarily on delivery. The "Form E" Debate Ballot, currently used in most major tournaments, provides no criteria for evaluating a debate. The judge is free to apply his own criteria and priorities in making the decision. Consequently, an even greater disparity often exists among debate judges.

My first priority in arriving at my decision in judging a debate is analysis and refutation which I will combine into a single term, ISSUES. This is the ingredient that uniquely distinguishes debate from all other forensic events. Once the negative team outlines the major areas of clash between teams, I follow those arguments as they are extended and developed during the course of the debate. I believe that if the affirmative team drops any significant negative argument, they should lose the debate and my decision is relatively easy. For example, if the negative team raises serious doubt as to the efficacy of the affirmative plan and the affirmative team fails to dispel that doubt, my decision goes negative.

My second priority is EVIDENCE AND REASONING. Assuming that the affirmative team presents a prima facie case, the negative team must substantiate their major arguments with evidence or I will decide for the affirmative.

My third consideration is organization and delivery which I will combine under the category, SPEECH SKILLS. If both teams appear equal in analysis of issues and evidence, I usually vote for the team which is better organized and more persuasive in presenting their case. A rapid fire delivery with slurred, sloppy articulation often becomes unintelligible in a debate round. The heavy use of debate lingo and cliches such as "PMN's," "DA's," and "flow" also hampers effective communication.

Other subjective factors in a debate often affect my judgment adversely. These factors tend to influence my decision although I would not make them the sole rationale for win or loss. One factor that turns me against a particular debater is the use of profanity in a debate speech. I do not believe profanity is appropriate in public address and I will rate that speaker low on the ballot. Sarcasm and discourtesy also affect me adversely.

Finally, I would like to propose a standard for debate judges which I will call "The Golden Rule of Debate." It is to treat other teams as you would like for your team to be treated. I believe the application of this simple principle by debate judges would result in the best possible decisions in a tournament. It would cause judges to flow a debate conscientiously, to explain the reasons for their decisions carefully, and include comments on the ballot which would help each team to improve their debating skills.

Janet M. Vasilius

Ideally, my judging philosophy is very simple: I vote for the team which persuades me their position is true. However, as academic debate is rarely ideal, certain criteria aid in decision making. Frequently, the criteria must be decided in the individual round; the increasing discussion of argumentation theory by debate participants is an excellent demonstration of the dynamism of debate. The team that wishes to argue hypothesis testing, counterplans, conditional arguments or value validity should be allowed to argue for their strategy. Likewise, the team that chooses to isolate a single issue in the debate should have that discretion.

Unfortunately, many teams lack either the inclination or ability to discuss argumentation theory in competition. For these teams the "policy maker" judging criteria has several advantages. First, the teams must argue consistently. When two speakers on the same team contradict each other, there is no coherent policy presented. When this occurs the obvious conclusion is that the teams in contradiction are confused, refuse to listen to each other or are misrepresenting their research. This is, of course, not to deny that a team may take divergent approaches to an issue, merely that these approaches must not be in contradiction.

Second, the comparison of two policy options clarifies issues by placing them in contrast. Thus, the critic can evaluate the advantages of the affirmative proposal by

examining the risks suggested by the disadvantages; the progressivity of the status quo must be measured against the speed and universality with which the affirmative may implement the proposal; the values inherent in the affirmative may be considered against the competing values of the negative.

Third, traditional components of argumentation such as burden of proof and presumption fit comfortably into the model. Rather than compare two policies on an equally competitive basis, as may occur when a counterplan is advanced, the affirmative has the burden of overcoming the risk inherent in change. Plan objections become particularly important if the rationale for change can be supported by the affirmative. Most systems need change, the difficulty is in the implementation of that change. The burden of refutation is also clarified by policy comparison as each team is forced to view the totality of the opposition's position, rather than focusing on a few isolated issues. Coverage is very much a part of the burden of refutation.

Fourth, policy decisions allow a comprehensive discussion of the issues within the limited time allowed. The prime difficulty in hypothesis testing is the confusion that results when an inexpert team attempts to explore maximum possibilities in a minimal amount of time. On the other end of the spectrum, teams who limit their discussion to a few issues produce argumentative redundancy, rather than argumentative depth.

The topic, and the affirmative case restrict argumentation; there is no need for further curtailment. Policy making is the most practicable approach to judging.

The counterplan has been prominent in recent years; the conditional or hypothetical counterplan has also surfaced. Counterplans serve to expand the scope of argumentation by allowing the negative team to develop the best arguments, rather than merely the traditional arguments, concerning the resolution. With a counterplan, the negative team may deviate from defense of the status quo, or may expose a faulty affirmative proposal by presenting an alternative to that solution. A counterplan imposes the burdens of non-topicality, competitiveness and an additional advantage which the negative must secure to counteract the shift of presumption. The conditional counterplan provides a solution to the dilemma faced by the negative speaker who perceives a need for change, but cannot suggest a minor change without adopting the resolutive change suggested by the affirmative.

With the inclusion of parameters with the debate resolution, topicality can be perplexing for the critic. Some cases may be topical but not fit the parameters; a few cases may be parametrical without being topical. As the Developmental Conference which suggested the parameters also specified that the parameters not be binding on the team's interpretation of the resolution, it would be inappropriate for an individual critic to restrict the competitors. My view of

topicality has tended to be fairly liberal in practice, not because I ignore topicality arguments, but because few topicality arguments have persuaded me that the affirmative case lie outside the bounds of the resolution. Extratopicality, as a device to reduce solvency or the significance of an affirmative case, seems to be a more practicable argument.

Attitudinal inherency is as legitimate as structural inherency. Actually, as structural inherency is ultimately based on attitudes, attitudinal inherency is both cause and effect of structural inherency and should be considered at least as viable. Teams arguing attitudinal inherency, however, may encounter difficulties in claiming solvency.

The turnaround of a disadvantage to an advantage is an old technique with a recent label. The best defense is still a good offense; by turning a disadvantage to the favor of the affirmative team, the defeat of the attack is absolute. However, the additive advantage gained by the affirmative demands external support before it should be added to the benefits of the affirmative case.

Cross examination plays an important part in decision making. All cross examination periods are flowed and referred to as the debate progresses. A position taken in the cross examination period is binding; a question left unanswered is as damaging as a dropped argument; a question that is not raised before rebuttals may not be asked at that time. Cross examination effectiveness is a characteristic of a competent team, whether the team is questioning or responding.

Ethics cannot be overemphasized. The quantity of evidence used, the closed nature of most debate rounds and the mobility of individual teams provide ample opportunity for abuse. On a very basic ethical level is a "fairness doctrine." This dictates that new arguments cannot be raised in rebuttal, that arguments dropped by one speaker cannot be revived by his partner and that the second affirmative rebuttal is an inappropriate time to clarify the affirmative case. Refusal to allow the opposition to examine evidence or case, refusal to clarify or answer questions and use of incomplete source citations hinder the ability of the opposition to debate. These, and other practices, can contribute to the loss of a ballot. On questions of varying interpretation of evidence each team has the opportunity to convince the critic that their view is justified; ultimately the critic may examine the evidence herself. The falsification, adulteration or gross deletion from context of a piece of documentation is grounds for an immediate loss.

Personal quirks also play a large part in forming a judging philosophy. A fast speaking rate is usually indicative of argumentative sophistication unfortunately restricted by time allotment; however, many teams mistake speed as the cause, rather than as the symptom, of excellence. Courtesy to critic, partner and opposition is essential. Disadvantages that do not apply specifically to a given plan have no place in the debate round, no matter how extensively they are developed;



arguments unsupported by evidence are totally acceptable if the analysis is sound. No argument should be issued that cannot suggest an impact. No speaker should repeat an argument when she can extend an argument. Adequate preparation, skill in argumentation, inventiveness and consideration should make debate a satisfying experience for all involved.

#### Kass Kovalcheck

In recent years the issue of the philosophy of judging intercollegiate debates has gained increasing importance among those interested in both the practice and theory of debate. This concern is an extension of the controversy in the late 1950's and early 1960's between those people who called themselves "issue judges" and those people who voted on "who did the better debating." The question, then, in judging was that a debate topic might be so one sided that a team could not win the issues of the debate but could be so superior in the techniques of debate that even while losing the issues, they should be awarded a victory. For years the American Forensics Association Debate Ballots asked judges to award the decision "to the team that did the better debating." In the past few years this concept has been extended to include such argumentative devices as conditional counterplans, additive advantages, "turnarounds," and propositional arguments. All these are part of the same package, and a

judge's statement of philosophy usually indicates what the judge will emphasize in the decision rather than a statement that departs from normal argumentation theory.

Most of us who judge debates accept these precepts:

(1) the affirmative must advocate a change from the present system; (2) that change must be supported by "good reasons," either advantages over the present system or some need inherent in the present system; (3) the change has to solve the problem; and (4) there cannot be overriding disadvantages to making that change. While most judges tend to accept these standards, individual differences do exist. For example, some judges, when faced with an affirmative case with a real problem but a strong indication that the plan will not solve the problem will still vote for the affirmative unless the negative can provide a disadvantage. Others (and I believe myself to be part of the others) will not vote for the affirmative, even if no disadvantages exist, unless there is clear indication that the plan will solve the problem.

Another instance of judging variation is present in the question of counter plans. Some judges believe that a counterplan must solve the same problem the affirmative outlines. Others, in a period when affirmative cases are so narrowly drawn, argue that as long as the counterplan is non-propositional and that the negative can demonstrate the proposals are mutually exclusive, then the plans are compared on relative benefit, even if the negative solves a different problem.

All differences, however, only reflect a commonality of opinion on argumentation theory. Judges vote on the issues and the resolution of those issues is determined by the team that "did the better debating." For those of us judging a significant number of debates each year, we inevitably find ourselves emphasizing different parts of debate theory in every round, but decisions are made as I make them--based on the need for a change, the workability of that change and the disadvantages that change creates. For all the differences of judging philosophy that individuals might espouse, those have been the standards of judgment since Richard Whately became re-incarnated in the ideal first affirmative speech.

## NOTES

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