



ORANGE COUNTY DEBATE LEAGUE

*E verbis victoria*

# OCDL Charter

Revised October 13, 2016

*A non-profit corporation dedicated to  
children's education in the art of debate*

---

# Table of Contents

---

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PUBLIC DEBATE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>REQUIREMENTS FOR OCDL MEMBERSHIP .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OCDL.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION POSITIONS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>PRESIDENT .....</b>	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>VICE PRESIDENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>TABULATION ADMINISTRATOR .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>HEAD JUDGE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.6</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION SELECTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>JUDGING.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>STANDARD OF DEBATE PERFORMANCE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>GENERAL RULES OF OCDL EVENTS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>GENERAL PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>POINTS OF INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>HECKLING .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<b>NEW ARGUMENTS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8.4</b>	<b>BURDEN OF PROOF.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8.5</b>	<b>TWO-PERSON TEAM RULES.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8.6</b>	<b>ANNUAL PERFORMANCE RANKINGS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8.7</b>	<b>FINE SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8.8</b>	<b>TOPIC NARROWING .....</b>	<b>9</b>

**8.9 ALTERNATES ..... 10**

**8.10 SCRAMBLE TEAM ..... 10**

**8.11 IMPROMPTU DEBATE..... 10**

**9. GRIEVANCE PROCESS ..... 10**

**10. ACTS OF REMOVAL ..... 11**

**11. CHARTER AMENDMENT PROCESS ..... 11**

---

## 1. Introduction

In an effort to better extend the mission as well as maintain the integrity of the organization, we have created this document outlining all roles, responsibilities, and administrator functions for the Orange County Debate League (herein referred to as “OCDL”). It is the hope of the creators of the OCDL to ensure that every student who *wants* to participate is *able* to participate in a fun and educational environment. This document is to be referenced as a general guideline for the administration of the OCDL, yet to properly use this Charter, strict attention should be paid to the spirit of the rules, not simply the letter of the rules. Included are the guidelines for all conceived aspects of the Orange County Debate League.

## 2. Relationship with the Middle School Public Debate Program

As a member of the Middle School Public Debate Program (hereafter referred to as “MSPDP”), the OCDL will make every effort to adhere to the rules established by the former. However, at times the OCDL can and may deviate from protocol established by the MSPDP.

## 3. Requirements for OCDL Membership

The requirements for each participating school to become a “member school” of the OCDL are as follows:

- a) Prospective schools must be public, private, religious, for-profit after school academy, or a homeschool group. The OCDL is not open to individual students competing independently.
- b) Each school must pay the required annual dues to the OCDL in a timely manner. The Board of Directors will determine a fair and reasonable amount per squad.
- c) A participating school of the OCDL must bring at least one OCDL certified judge for every six debaters the school sends to each tournament. Some measure of leniency may be provided to “new” schools.
- d) Registration for dues payment is October 31<sup>st</sup>. If there is a school membership cap, “existing” members have priority. On November 1st, schools will be admitted to the OCDL on a first-come-first-serve basis, space permitting.
- e) All OCDL coaches are required to be available as an OCDL Administrator or a judge.
- f) For each tournament, schools may register up to two squads and up to six teams per squad (or eighteen students per squad for scramble tournaments).

## 4. Responsibilities of the Executive Administration

The OCDL must see to it that all of the following are present during each season.

1. Five tournaments, including one “scramble” tournament and one championship
2. A public awards ceremony with trophies offered at the end of each tournament
3. At least one student workshop
4. At least one judge workshop
5. Timely issuance of administrative paper work (dues fees, permission slips) as well as topic announcements.
6. Annual ranking of the top speakers of the OCDL for the purposes of a championship admission. This ranking will combine average speaker points throughout the year and student win/loss record from all tournaments (except the scramble). Students must attend at least two “regular season” debates to qualifying these annual rankings. Specific guidelines for the ranking will be determined at the discretion of the Tabulation Administrator.

## 5. Executive Administration Positions

The Executive Administration of the OCDL is made up of five positions. Executive Administrators must have been in a leadership position in the OCDL or equivalent MSPDP league as for at least one year, and they are asked to serve a *full* one-year term. There are no term limits in the OCDL.

### 5.1 President

- Preside as official in charge for OCDL tournaments
- Provide opening and closing public address at tournaments
- Handle grievances from coaches and judges
- Remove, at his/her discretion, any student, parent, coach or school from the tournament
- Assist other administrators in any capacity deemed necessary
- Preside over coaches' meetings (held at least twice annually)
- Purchase and arrange trophy orders within OCDL budget guidelines.
- Create welcome packets for tournament attendees
- Correspond with potential schools and new schools and helps to facilitate entry of new schools
- Determine tournament topics and notify coaches of topics
- Do anything deemed necessary and proper for the development, continuation, and/or future success of the OCDL

### 5.2 Vice President

The Vice President is to share the roles and privileges of the President position. In the event that the President is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Vice President will be declared the official President, thereby assuming all responsibilities and privileges of the role. His/her first order of business is to name a new Vice President.

### 5.3 Tabulation Administrator

- Provide structural support for tournaments
- Create and post round pairings
- Announce topics and determine paper color
- Enter tournament data and track results
- Distribute trophies and medals at the awards ceremony
- Ensure timeliness of tournament schedules
- Remove a judge, at his/her discretion, from the judging pool
- Disqualify teams, at his/her discretion, at the request of a judge

### 5.4 Head Judge

- Responsible for the proper execution and maintenance of the Judge Certification Program
- Maintain records for all judges and their certification levels and contact information
- Require, at his/her discretion, audits of judges
- Handle issues of judge irregularity by auditing tournament results (variance review)
- Schedule and run judge workshops
- Lead the pre-tournament meeting with all certified judges

## 5.5 Hospitality Coordinator

- Determine and purchase food & drink options for judge/coach breakroom
- Work with host school on set-up and take down of the event
- Maintain supplies (cups, napkins, plates, tablecloth, cutlery)
- Handle issues of host school – OCDL relations (cleaning, lunch services, vendor sales)
- Work with the Board Director overseeing fundraising in regards to related matters

## 5.6 Administration Selection

Any person may serve as an officer in the executive administration provided he or she has been involved in the OCDL or MSPDP program for at least one full year. The Board of Directors shall elect any nominated officers at the annual general meeting at the beginning or end of the year. Nominations must be received by the board by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year for the subsequent annual selection. Each officer shall hold office until the officer resigns, is removed, or otherwise disqualified to serve; however, the Board of Directors may remove any officer at any time, with or without cause.

Any administrator may resign by giving written notice to the Board of Directors (the President or Secretary). The resignation will be effective when the notice is given unless it specifies a later time for the resignation to become effective. If an administrator's resignation is effective at a later time, the Board may elect a successor to take office as of the date when the resignation becomes effective.

Any vacancy caused by the resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, of any officer shall be filled by the Board of Directors. In the event of a vacancy in any office other than that of President, such vacancy may be filled temporarily by appointment by the President.

## 6. Judging

The OCDL prides itself on establishing a *fair and consistent* judging program. To maintain fair and consistent judging, all OCDL judges **must** participate in a mandatory training/shadowing program before being permitted to judge in any OCDL tournament.

Consistency in judging can be a challenge primarily because judges are human with different backgrounds and experiences. The OCDL must balance the need for a well-trained set of consistent-scoring judges while at the same time, keep in mind that OCDL judges are volunteers comprised of teachers, coaches, parents, and students.

In an effort to aim for consistent scoring, the OCDL trains judges to follow the OCDL RUBRIC when allotting speaker points. Debaters, coaches, and parents need to understand that some inconsistencies are bound to occur. In any life situation, the audience of a debater will be different depending upon the audience's personal background.

The goal of a great debater is to convenience the majority of peoples a majority of times.

### Standard of Debate Performance

The OCDL RUBRIC is a standard of debate performance that the OCDL uses to minimize scoring variances between judges. The OCDLs' goal is to *rarely* have more than a 10-point variance between judges. The underlying theory behind this goal is that a student's performance is likely to remain largely consistent

throughout the day of a single tournament. For example, if one student were to be judged by three different judges on the same debate, the OCDL expects that the scores for that student should remain within about a 10-point variance between the three judges. Randomly increasing and decreasing (highly divergent) variances are especially frustrating. Variations greater than 10 points are, in most cases, due to inconsistencies in judging.

The 2016-2017 OCDL Judge Guide should be consulted for any further information on judge matters.

## 7. General Rules of OCDL Events

Debate tournaments are gatherings for educational training and collegiality akin to professional conferences. Competition is used as a laboratory setting for skill development, but it is hardly an end in itself. There is no place at debate events for anger, shame, bullying, unprofessional favoritism, or gossip. All attendees should be reminded that it is appropriate to communicate professionally with other parties.

All OCDL events have basic rules to which all students, parents, and coaches must adhere. In the event that a particular host school's rules actively conflict with the rules listed here, the OCDL rules will supersede that of the individual school.

- Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds until the last round of debate has concluded.
- Students and coaches must arrive before the conclusion of the registration period.
- No filming/photography of debates is permitted, except by the official photographer contracted by the OCDL Executive Administration.
- Neither debaters nor parents may enter in the debate chambers (host school classrooms) without BOTH a judge and another student present.
- Debate students, parents and judges MUST respect the property held within each classroom and school. Tampering with the personal belongings of students and teachers found in/on desks and in/around lockers is not permitted.
- The debate audience (i.e. the peanut gallery) must not participate in the debate event with the exception of knocking on the desk for a good argument. This non-participation rule includes subversive gestures intended to influence the outcome of the debate, as well as vocal heckling. Rules for the final public debate are excluded from this rule, with more specific rules of the public debate being given prior to the actual event.
- No one may enter or exit a debate chamber in the middle of a given debater's speech. If a debater or an audience member must leave the debate chamber for any reason, he/she must do so in between given speeches.
- Students, parents, and coaches are responsible for collecting their own (and group's) belongings. This includes both academic belongings such as paper, pencils, and binders, as well as personal belongings such as clothing, food, trash, etc.
- Food/drink is not permitted in the in-door debate meeting area or the individual debate chambers.
- Students may consult with coaches, friends, and parents during the twenty minute prep round prior to the debate.
- Students may not consult any electronic resources during the prep round of the debate. This includes use of cell phones, smart phones, e-readers, tablets, and laptops.
- Once in the debate chamber, students may only have access to the colored paper of the round and a blank flow chart. Students using unauthorized paper resources during the debate round will have their team disqualified for the given round, and the speaker points of the individual speaker using the paper resources will be reduced to 0 points for the round.

- In the event that a given team does not show up on time for a given debate, that team may be disqualified. Given the twenty-minute prep period has expired and the judge has arrived at the debating chamber, debate teams are given a ten minute grace period to show up **PREPARED TO DEBATE**.
- No one is to address the judge, except to show appreciation and to ask questions for the purpose of learning and improving. Statements that question the judge's decision or put him/her on the spot are not permitted.
- Students with disabilities may have exceptions made to note taking and like situations pursuant to the Americans with Disability Act; however, the President needs to be notified of any exception prior to the start of a given tournament.

## 8. General Procedural Guidelines

The OCDL uses a modified parliamentary debate, and debaters and judges must adhere to specific guidelines. However, distinction must be made between official “rules” and “tactics”. While judges may *recommend* tactics, the official rules of debating in the OCDL are included below.

### 8.1 Points of Information

- May be questions or statements
- Given during the middle three minutes of the four constructive speeches
- May only assume up to 15 seconds at a given time
- Any debater may make a point of information
- May be offered by a debater simply rising from his/her seat, or offering a short request (e.g. “point of information”, or “on that point”)

### 8.2 Heckling

- One word (argumentative) interruption of a debater’s speech
- May be questions or statements
- Acceptable at any point in the debate
- Heckling is not to express disagreement with the other side. Everyone knows the teams are at odds with each other. Heckling is more effectively used to add real-time and brief arguments for the benefit of the judge.
- Heckles can constitute a full argument: premised on the reasoning of the opponent heckles can meet the requirements of AREI.
- Once made, heckles should **not** be repeated. The judge is informed of the position. Simply saying ‘shame’ again and again do not effectively communicate the unique cause of what is meant by the heckle
- Debaters should be judicious about heckles and thereby draw attention to them.

### 8.3 New Arguments

New arguments are not permitted in rebuttal speeches. Rebuttal speakers may add to or respond to other arguments already presented in the debate. All speakers may present new information, analysis, evidence, etc. to continue to advance lines of argument. No student is expected to simply repeat information from a previous speaker but rather to continually develop ideas. This is also the case for the rebuttal speaker.

The issue of ‘no new arguments’ is a check on an entirely new position, previously unexpressed in the debate, from entering in the final speech for a side when it cannot be properly examined by the opposing side.

## 8.4 Burden of Proof

The OCDL maintains a *minimal* burden of proof on the Proposition. The Proposition is asked to prove the case. If they do not, the Opposition is declared the winner. Victory in debate is often likened to a house of cards: The Proposition attempts to build a house whereas the Opposition attempts to knock it down. If the house still stands, the Proposition wins.

## 8.5 Two-person Team Rules

- Schools **can** send a two-person team, but this practice is strongly discouraged.
- Judges should give individual scores for each speech when judging a 2-person team. There should be 3 separate scores, one for each role in the debate (1<sup>st</sup> speaker, 2<sup>nd</sup> speaker, and rebuttal speaker).
- The two separate scores will be averaged as part of the student’s final score.

## 8.6 Annual Performance Rankings

After the third tournament of the year, the Tabulation Administrator will performance rank all the students who have participated in the OCDL. To be eligible for ranking, a student must have participated in at least two of the “regular season” tournaments (December through March). Student rank is determined by average speaker points (70%) and win/loss record (30%). The Tabulation Administrator will use rankings to allot available spaces for the spring regional MSPDP Championship.

## 8.7 Fine System

Schools failing to provide the requisite number for judges will be fined as follows:

- \$100 for every missing judge
- \$25 for every judge failing to show for his/her round

## 8.8 Topic Narrowing

In the OCDL, students are developing the skills of impromptu argumentation; this includes interdisciplinary thinking and spontaneous reply. Students also develop the skills of argument anticipation – ‘guesstimating’ the options of their opponents in a debate. The act of narrowing the topic facilitates all these skills.

It is very common for the Proposition to narrow (or define terms within) the debate topic. The primary reason: the Proposition only has a five-minute speech to present its case. It is not possible to discuss all the relevant issues on any subject in that period of time. Of course, the speech acts of the debaters further define and limit the topic. What a speaker means by the words of the topic also inevitably alters and narrows the motion for debate.

The advantage in narrowing a topic lies in the fact that there will be a more detailed, manageable debate for both sides. For the Proposition, narrowing a topic should provide fewer opportunities for Opposition attacks. The Opposition is encouraged, but not required, to accept the narrowing given by the Proposition. In some cases, the Opposition may challenge a Proposition team’s narrowing. In this case, the judge does not decide

whether the narrowing is unfairly narrow; rather, the judge determines if the Opposition's arguments and reasoning as to *why* the narrowing is unfair is sufficient. Even if a judge personally feels the narrowing is unfair, it is up to the Opposition to explain why it is unfair. There may be an exceptional circumstance in which an interpretation may seem tricky, too challenging, or unfair; however, this should be exceptionally rare.

Finally, while there is no rule forbidding the Opposition from narrowing a debate topic, it is highly discouraged as it is unlikely to be beneficial for the Opposition.

## 8.9 Alternates

OCDL policy holds that students must make a commitment for the *entire day*. It is not possible to have a "rotate-in" alternate during a tournament; the same three people must debate together the entire day. In instances where a student becomes ill and can no longer compete, the two remaining students can continue debating.

"Alternates" only apply in the event, in which someone does not show up before round 1 begins. A coach can rearrange teams before the tabulation staff runs the pairings for round 1. Teams then stay the same the entire day (see Scramble Team below).

## 8.10 Scramble Team

If more than one coach has a student without teammates at a tournament, the administration has the authority to create a "scramble team", a mixed team of odd-man-out students from a variety of schools. They would be able to compete as a separate entity independent of any other school. In other words, the tournament would run as a normal tournament, but one team (of several students from different schools) would be a scramble team. This team would be created on tournament day **only if the need arose**, but it would allow any students whose partner(s) did not show up the chance to still compete. This scramble team could take home school, team and individual awards. The OCDL strongly prefers not to encourage this practice.

## 8.11 Impromptu Debate

OCDL tournaments often include an impromptu topic debate. For these debates, it is *highly unlikely* that students will have hard evidence (statistics, quotes, etc.) to support a case; in fact, the OCDL forbids the use of electronic resources during the prep time. Thus, it is more likely that cases will be built upon plausible, hypothetical examples. These are sufficient to meet the requirements for A-R-E-I argument construction.

## 9. Grievance Process

In the event that students or parents have a complaint or concern about a judge or another team/school, they are to see their coach. The coach gathers information from them. Understandably, what students remember happening and what actually happened are not always the same. If the coach feels it is appropriate, he/she may take it to the next level by petitioning the Head Judge or President.

The Tabulation Administrator only gets involved for the following:

- A rules violation, OR
- Recommendation for retraining a judge, OR
- In extreme cases, removing a judge from judging the rest of the tournament

In all of the above cases, it is up to the Head Judge or President to determine if the situation will be brought to the Tabulation Administrator.

The Tabulation Administrator never reverses a decision. He or she did not observe the debate, so to do so would be unfair. It is the judge's decision. This is part of the learning experience, not only for students but also for parents.

In cases of judge-related grievances, sometimes all that is needed is clarifying something to the judge. The coach of the school that the judge represents should be present and either the President and/or Head Judge will talk with them. If it isn't as simple as that, the Administration may require the judge to retrain, thus removing him/her from judging until that is complete. This needs to be handled respectfully and with regard to the person's feelings. Once retraining is complete then the person will be allowed to judge again.

It is possible to have someone who will not be able to return to active judging status. Since this is a sensitive matter, all involved need to be upfront with the coach and the particular judge. It must be handled respectfully with regard to the person's feelings. He/she is a volunteer and may simply choose not to re-certify.

## **10. Acts of Removal**

The OCDL may need to restrict membership to maintain an environment conducive to fun and educational purposes. Outlined below are reasons that the OCDL President may exclude individuals or groups from debate competition, events, and even OCDL membership. In all cases, fair and upfront warning must be given to the school or individual in question before the removal process begins.

Schools may be restricted from membership for the following reasons:

- Failure to submit annual dues in a timely manner as prescribed above
- Failure to bring a sufficient number of OCDL-certified judges (this may be used to limit teams of a given school)
- Institutional disregard for the rules established in the Charter

Individuals may be restricted from membership or asked to leave the tournament for the following reasons:

- Continued defiance of OCDL rules
- Simply one particularly inappropriate or egregious behavior, as determined by the President

## **11. Charter Amendment Process**

Coaches and administrators of member schools (and Administration members) may submit proposed Charter amendments to the President by May 1<sup>st</sup>. The President will then compile a list of amendments to be submitted to the Board of Directors. The vote must take place prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>. Only the Board of Directors may approve changes to the Charter.