



ORANGE COUNTY DEBATE LEAGUE

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OCDL Charter

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

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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) Membership Requirements

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, after school academy, or homeschool group.
- b) The OCDL tournaments are not open to students competing independently of the entities mentioned above.
- c) 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.
- d) Annual dues must be received by October 31st each year. Returning schools will be given priority should over new schools. If space permits, new schools will be admitted to the OCDL on November 1st on a first-come, first-served basis.

3) Tournament Requirements

- a) A participating school of the OCDL must bring at least one OCDL certified judge for every two debate teams (or six debaters for the scramble tournament) the participating school sends to the each tournament. New schools may request an exemption in their inaugural year provided they make their request at least two weeks before the tournament day. Some measure of leniency may be provided to “new” schools.
- b) For each tournament, schools may register up to two squads with up to six teams per squad or eighteen students per squad for scramble tournaments.

3.1 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

4) Responsibilities of the League

Each season, the OCDL will provide:

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.
7. Correspond with potential schools and new schools and helps to facilitate entry of new schools.
8. Determine tournament topics and notify coaches of topics.
9. Handle grievances from coaches and judges.

5) League Organization

The OCDL is made up of four committees. Each committee will be led by at least one OCDL board member.. Individuals may volunteer to serve in a committee by expressing interest to the Board of Directors.

5.1 Tabulation Committee

- Provide structural support for tournaments
- Create welcome packets for tournament attendees
- Create and post round pairings
- Announce topics and determine paper color
- Enter tournament data and track results
- Calculate, print and deliver standings to the awards committee at the end of each tournament.
- Ensure timeliness of tournament schedules

5.2 Awards Committee

- Purchase and arrange trophy orders within OCDL budget guidelines.
- Distribute trophies and medals at the awards ceremony

5.3 Judging Committee

- Responsible for the proper execution and maintenance of the Judge Certification Program
- Maintain records for all judges and their certification levels and contact information
- As necessary, require 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
- As necessary, remove a judge from the judging pool

5.4 Hospitality Committee

- Determine and purchase food & drink options for judge/coach breakroom
- Work with host school on setup and takedown 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

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 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. Inconsistencies are normal and bound to occur.

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

Standard of Debate Performance

Students will be scored according to the OCDL Rubric. The OCDL RUBRIC is the standard of debate performance that the OCDL uses to minimize scoring variances between judges. The OCDL's goal is to *rarely* have more than a 10-point variance between judges.

7) General Rules of OCDL Events

Debate tournaments are gatherings for educational training, where competition is used for skill development. 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 Board of Directors.
- Neither debaters nor parents may enter 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) Two-person Team Rules

- Three-person teams are expected, but a schools can send a two-person team when there are not enough students attending to fill another 3 person-team..
- 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 (1st speaker, 2nd speaker, and rebuttal speaker).
- The two separate scores will be averaged as part of the student's final score.

9) Scramble Team

If more than one coach has a student without teammates at a tournament, the league 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 **only if the need arises**, 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.

10) 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).

11) 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.

12) 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

13) Charter Amendment Process

Coaches and administrators of member schools (and Administration members) may submit proposed Charter amendments to the President by May 1st. 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 1st. Only the Board of Directors may approve changes to the Charter.