

# Judges' Briefing

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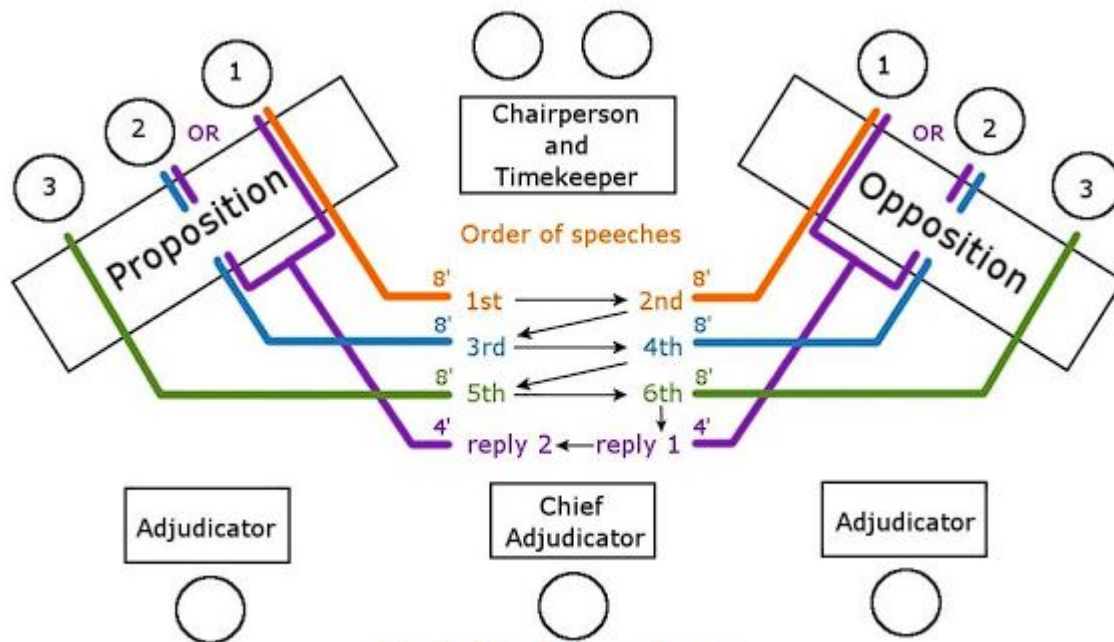
# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Presentation on the WSDC debate format and scoring system
  - 2.1. The WSDC debate format
  - 2.2. Judging Categories
  - 2.3. Scoring system for JL and SL
3. Information on conferral judging in Senior League
4. Questions & Answers

# 2.1:

## The WSDC debate format

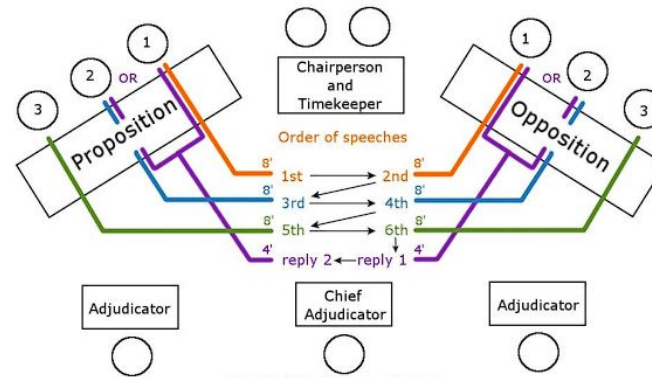
# Duration and succession of speeches



*Fig.1: The debate layout*

# 1st PROP

- Stats
  - Speaking time: 8 min. (SL) / 6 min. (JL)
  - Range of marks: 60-80
  - Position in debate: 1
- To-do
  - Define the motion
  - Locate the debate
  - Introduce line of argumentation (case) and timeline
  - At least one argument (sorted by importance in descending order)



# 1st OPP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 8 min. (SL) / 6 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 60-80
- Position in debate: 2

- To-do

- Agree or disagree with the definition, expand the motion if needed.
  - If the definition by 1st PROP seems inappropriate or unfair, explain why and come up with a better one. Add any missing definition(s).
- Decide and motivate the decision whether to defend the status quo (or offer a counter PROP)
- Rebuttal of PROP 1st (~35%)
- Present OPP's teamline
- Argument(s) sorted by importance in descending order (~65%)

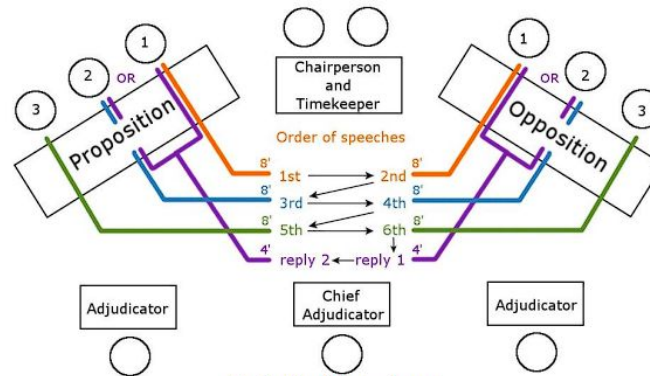


Fig.1: The debate layout

# 2nd PROP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 8 min. (SL) / 6 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 60-80
- Position in debate: 3

- To-do

- Rebuttal of OPP 1st (~50%)
  - If 1st OPP modified or declined the definition, they should mention it and tell us their stance on that.
- Reconstruction
  - Rebuttal of the rebuttal: Why are their points still relevant? Why is the rebuttal OPP made wrong?
- Additional argument(s) (~50%)

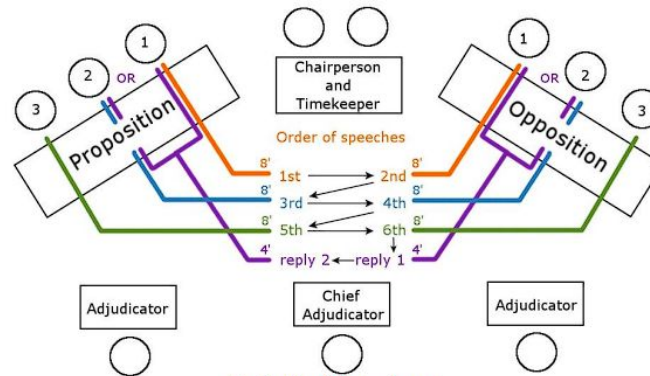


Fig.1: The debate layout

# 2nd OPP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 8 min. (SL) / 6 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 60-80
- Position in debate: 4

- To-do

- Rebuttal of PROP ( $\approx 60\%$ )
- Reconstruction
  - Rebuttal of the rebuttal: Why are their points still relevant? Why is the rebuttal PROP made wrong?
- Additional argument(s) ( $\approx 40\%$ )

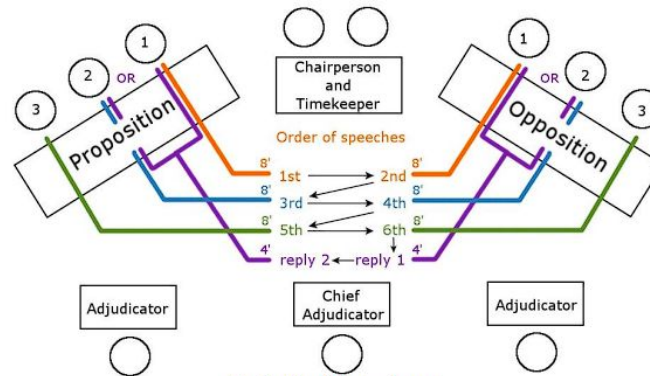


Fig.1: The debate layout



# 3rd PROP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 8 min. (SL) / 6 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 60-80
- Position in debate: 5

- To-do

- Rebut all arguments provided by OPP and reconstruct own case (≈80%)
- Link everything back to the case, bring up new examples (≈20%)
- Usually no new arguments in 3rd speeches (but technically allowed if announced in 1st)
- There is no need to repeat or summarize every argument!

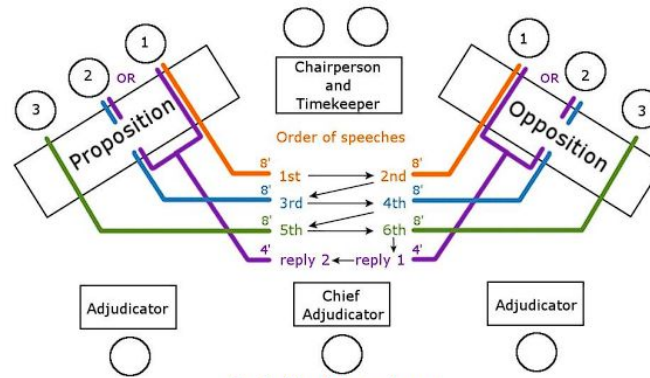


Fig.1: The debate layout

# 3rd OPP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 8 min. (SL) / 6 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 60-80
- Position in debate: 6

- To-do

- Rebut all arguments provided by PROP and reconstruct own case (≈80%)
- Link everything back to the case, bring up new examples (≈20%)
- Usually no new arguments in 3rd speeches (but technically allowed if announced in 1st)
- There is no need to repeat or summarize every argument!

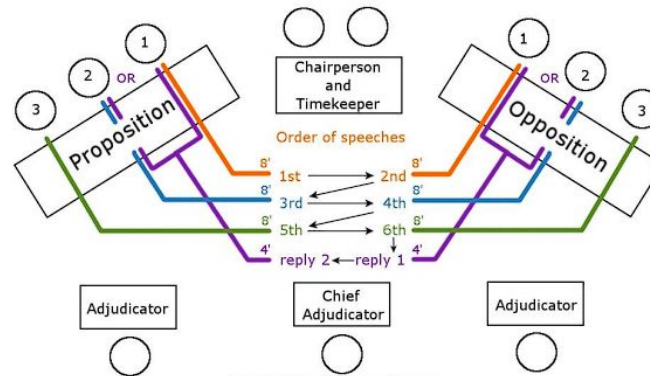


Fig.1: The debate layout

# Reply OPP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 4 min. (SL) / 3 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 30-40
- Position in debate: 7

- To-do

- Detect the main clashes of the debate
- Highlight key areas of disagreement and points left standing
- The speaker should “take a step back” and provide a broader perspective on the whole debate
- **No new rebuttal!**
- **No new arguments!**
- **No POIs!**

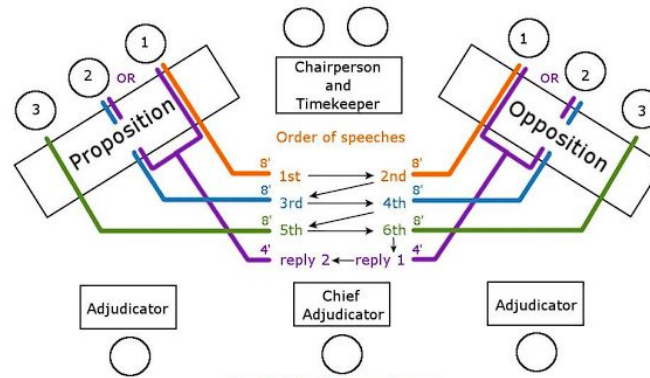


Fig.1: The debate layout

# Reply PROP

- Stats

- Speaking time: 4 min. (SL) / 3 min. (JL)
- Range of marks: 30-40
- Position in debate: 8

- To-do

- Detect the main clashes of the debate
- Highlight key areas of disagreement and points left standing
- The speaker should “take a step back” and provide a broader perspective on the whole debate
- **No new rebuttal!**
- **No new arguments!**
- **No POIs!**

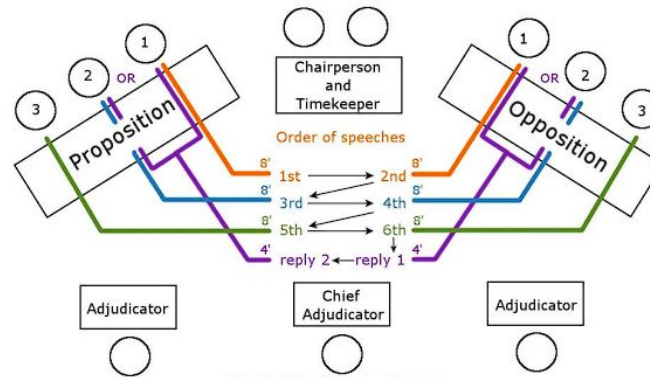


Fig.1: The debate layout

# Time management during speeches

1st PROP		1st OPP	
definition, case, team line,	6-7' substantive arguments	2-3' address definition, case, rebuttal	5-6' substantive arguments
2nd PROP		2nd OPP	
4' rebuttal	4' substantive	4-5' rebuttal	3-4' substantive
3rd PROP		3rd OPP	
6-7' rebuttal	link to case	6-7' rebuttal	link to case

(Specific times may vary depending on the debate)

# Points of Information (POI)

- A speaker can ask a question or make an objection to the person currently delivering their main speech. This is called “Point of Information” (POI)
- In order to offer a POI the speaker should get up and say e.g. “Point of information please!” or “On this point, please!” (common ‘rude’ versions like “Last chance!” are considered bad style)
- It is up to the speaker that is holding their speech to accept or decline (verbally!) a POI that is offered
- If the POI is accepted, the speaker is expected to briefly respond before moving on with their speech
- Every speaker should offer two POIs during an opponent's speech
  - In total: 3 Speeches (other side) x 2 POIs = (at least) 6 POIs during the whole debate/speaker
- Every speaker should accept 1-2 POIs during their own speech
- A POI shouldn't be longer than 15 seconds

# After a debate

- After the end of the last speech, judges should thank the teams and encourage them to shake hands with each other
- Judges and debaters then retire to separate rooms
- Judges take time to **review their notes and make a decision**
  - In JL, this decision is **final**. In SL, it may change (see section 3)
- When all judges are ready, the **chair judge** moderates the judges' deliberation
- After the deliberation, the chair judge announces and explains the decision to the teams in a short speech, known as **Oral Adjudication (OA)** or Reasons for Decision (RfD)

## 2.2:

# Judging Categories



# Judging Categories

- There are **three judging categories** in WSDC debating:
  - **Style** (40% of score)
  - **Content** (40% of score)
  - **Strategy** (20% of score)
- Judges are expected to **consider and take notes** on all three categories
- It is encouraged (but not required) to structure **feedback** and OA speeches using these categories
- It is perfectly acceptable to base a decision on differences in any of these categories: Style **can outweigh** Content and/or Strategy (and vice versa)!

# Judging Categories: Style

- Style deals with *how* the content is presented
- Good style means that a speech is:
  - **Comprehensible:** Appropriate volume and speaking pace, no excessively complex or specialized vocabulary, steady delivery.
  - **Clearly structured:** Content is ordered sensibly, transitions are signposted using signal phrases (e.g. “After covering X, Let’s move on to Y”) and appropriately timed pauses.
  - **Confidently delivered:** Speaker is facing the audience in a secure stance and is speaking freely rather than reading out notes. Speaker is not “thrown off” by POIs or other reactions.
  - **Respectful and professional:** Emotion may be used as a stylistic device, but not excessively. Overt aggressiveness or condescension are considered bad style.
  - **Engaging\*:** *Effective use of voice modulation, humor, body language/gestures and rhetorical devices (e.g. climaxes, parallelisms, etc.) to emphasize important points.*

\* *Italicized sections: these criteria may not be realistic to expect from Junior League debaters*

# Judging Categories: Style (2)

- **Style does not include:**
  - **Language skills:** Do not mark speakers down for grammatical or vocabulary errors. Try not to be biased for or against native speakers or specific accents!
  - **Vocal pitch and timbre:** Speakers should never be expected to mask or distort their natural voice. Never score someone differently for having an especially “pleasant” or “unpleasant” voice.
  - **Any visual features** beyond body language, especially not a speaker’s physical appearance, choice of outfit, make-up or accessories.

# Judging Categories: Content

- Content deals with *what* is presented
- Good content means that arguments and rebuttals are:
  - **Well explained:** It is clear what the speaker means and there are no major gaps in the analysis.
  - **Logically coherent:** Causal relationships or mechanisms are explicitly explained and are not fallacious or contradictory.
  - **Relevant:** It is made clear how the arguments and rebuttals relate to the motion and to what was previously said in the debate.
- Arguments and rebuttals are stronger if they are:
  - **Comprehensive:** Arguments apply to a wide range of cases with few exceptions. Definitions and characterizations are not unnecessarily restrictive. Rebuttals address whole arguments, not just single examples.
  - **Backed by evidence:** Evidence for causal and empirical claims may include example cases, comparisons, statistics, references to scientific research, etc. *Moral and normative claims should instead be supported by comparing them to a similar, generally accepted norm.\**

# Judging Categories: Content (2)

- Content does not include:
  - **Nominal number of arguments:** One strong argument may beat many weak ones.
  - **Nominal amount of evidence:** Evidence is only relevant if it is clearly connected to an argument or rebuttal. A team should not win just because they quoted more studies or presented more statistics.
  - **Factual correctness:** Evidence presented should be accepted by judges as true unless it is contested by the other team. Expert knowledge judges may have should not influence their decision.
  - **The judge's opinion:** As long as arguments fulfill the criteria from the previous slide, you should score them highly, even if you personally disagree.
  - **What is not said:** Never mark a team down for not coming up with the same arguments you did.

# Judging Categories: Strategy

- Strategy deals with *why* debaters made certain choices
- Good strategy includes:
  - **Smart Framing:** Characterizing the motion and the circumstances in a way that maximizes impact and is consistent with your own arguments.
  - **Prioritization:** Teams should correctly identify their own and their opponents' strongest arguments and discuss them with priority.
  - **Time management:** Speakers should comply with the prescribed speaking time and use it effectively.
  - **Consistency:** Members of a team should have the same stance and should not contradict each other.
  - **Intellectual honesty:** Teams should be willing to engage with the other side on their highest ground and always rebut the strongest version of their arguments (no “strawmanning”).

# Judging POIs

- During a debate, every speaker is expected to **offer  $\approx 6$**  and **accept 1-2** POIs
- **Accepting** no POIs or too many POIs is penalized in **Strategy**
- **Quality of responses** to POIs is assessed in **Content**
- Amount and quality of **POIs offered** is assessed separately (“**POI adjustment**”)
  - Example: Speaker gives a great speech but offers no POIs  
→ Speaker loses maximum 1 point in POI adjustment
  - Example: Speaker gives a mediocre speech but makes two excellent POIs  
→ Speaker gains  $\approx 1$  point in POI adjustment
- If speech quality and POI quantity/quality are not very different, no POI adjustment is made.

# General Judging Expectations

- Judging is always at least partially subjective, there is **no universally correct rubric or algorithm**.
- However, you should make sure your decisions are:
  - **Justifiable:** You can clearly explain why you made the decision you did.
  - **Fair:** You judge all debaters on the same standards.
  - **Consistent:** Your standards do not change unpredictably between debates.
- Judges are not expected to be experts, only **informed members of the public**.
- There is no need for judges to do any prior research before debates.
- Make sure your **feedback is friendly and constructive**: Do not focus only on the negatives, but clearly highlight the positives as well.



## 2.3:

# Scoring System for JL and SL

# Scoring Basics

- Categories are assessed **separately** and then **summed up**
- Category scores range from **24-32** (Style, Content) and **12-16** (Strategy)  
⇒ Scores for overall speeches range from **60-80**
- **Half points** are allowed (e.g.  $28.5 + 28 + 14 = 70.5$ )
- Range of marks for reply speeches is halved (**30-40**)  
⇒ Category scores range from **12-16** (Style, Content) and **6-8** (Strategy)
- The team you award the win must have **more total points** than their opponents!
- Always **adjust points** to match the overall decision, never vice versa!

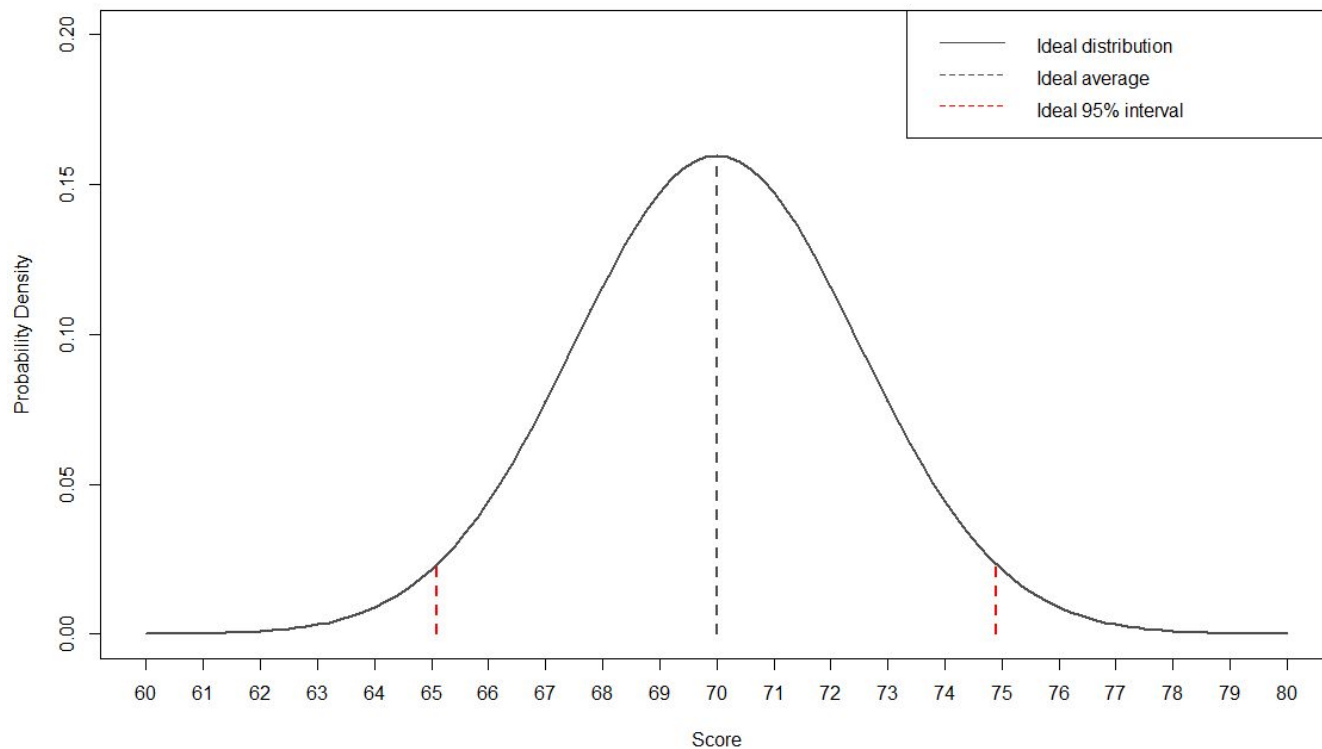
# Score calculation made easy!

- A **decent, average speech** receives **70 points** (28 Style + 28 Content + 14 Strategy)
- Category points can be tracked as **deviations from the average**, e.g.:
  - A strong argument receives +1 in Content
  - A speaker mumbling incomprehensibly receives -2 in Style
  - Prioritized rebuttal of the strongest argument receives +1 in Strategy
  - ...
- These deviations can easily be annotated while taking notes on the speech
- The speech's **overall score** is 70 plus the grand sum of all these deviations
  - e.g.  $70 + (\text{Content: } 1 + 1 - 0.5 = 1.5) + (\text{Style: } 1 - 0.5 = 0.5) + \text{Strategy } (-0.5) = \mathbf{71.5}$
- For reply speeches, simply **divide everything by 2** in the end and round to half points.

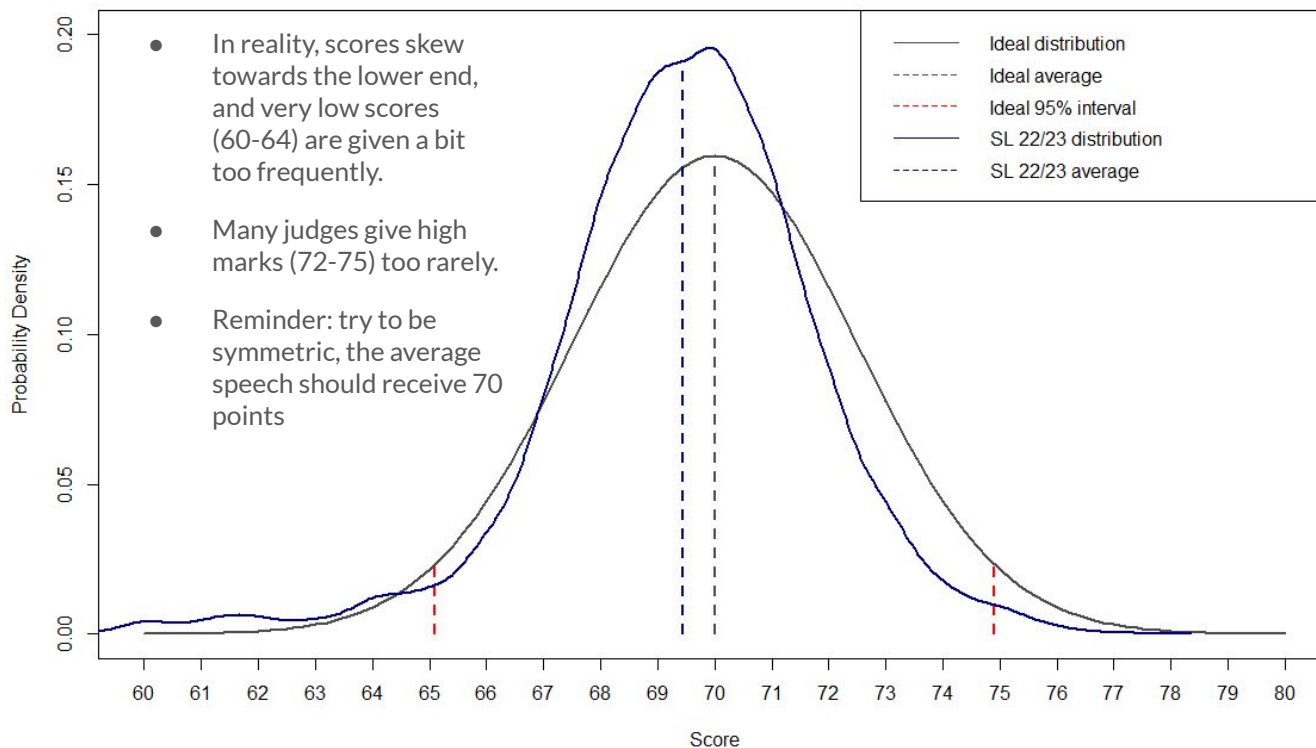
# Score Calibration

- A **decent, average speech** receives **70** points (28 Style, 28 Content, 14 Strategy)
  - A speaker who **did not give a speech at all** receives **60** points
  - The **vast majority** (>95%) of speeches are scored between **65 and 75** points
  - Try to be **symmetric** (e.g. give about as many 72s as 68s)
  - Do not revel in being a “strict marker”
- 
- **Scoring is subjective, so don't worry if your scores are different from those of other judges!**

# Score Calibration (2)



# Score Calibration (3)



# 3:

## Information on conferral judging in Senior League

# What is conferral judging?

- Key difference to previous format: Any adjudicator may change their decision at any time during the deliberation (scores and/or overall result)
- Procedure
  - Individually arrive at your preliminary decision: Winning team and speaker points
  - Deliberate: Any judge may change their decision at any time
    - Led by the chair judge
    - All judges (including shadow judges) are expected to participate
  - Final decision: Once you are done deliberating, everyone fills in their ballots to reflect their FINAL decision (Note: Speaker point adjustments might be necessary)



# Notes on conferral judging

- Every adjudicator has a different view on the debate, even with conferral judging split decisions are still possible
- What the deliberation IS intended to do
  - Clarify open questions on the debate
  - Understand the different perspectives on the debate
  - Discuss the most important clashes in the debate
- What the deliberation ISN'T intended to do
  - Convince other judges of your opinion, even if you are more experienced
  - Discuss every segment of the debate in detail
- Conferral judging is not used in Junior League: JL ballots should be submitted **before** the deliberation!

# Adjudication timeline

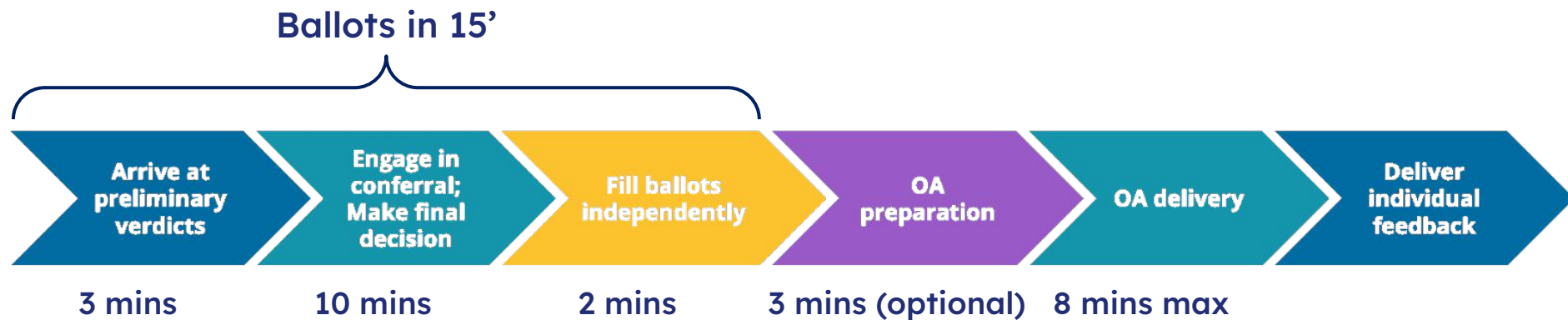


Image source: St. Andrews Pre-WSDC 2024 Judge Briefing

# 4:

# Questions & Answers

# Supplemental Material

- Rules for Junior and Senior League ([link](#))
- IDEA Learning Base (<https://learningbase.idebate.net/>):  
E-Learning modules for debating co-funded by the EU
- DSG handbook ([link](#)) ← *partially outdated!*
- Slides and minutes of this presentation will be circulated via e-mail and uploaded to the DSG website
- Please feel free to share these slides with debaters and/or use them as coaching materials: Debaters should know how they're being judged!