

Proposal to Change the Penalty for Rules Violations for Speech

Revised 8-21-09

Currently the rules' violation penalty for Speech events reads:

D. Disqualification The committee in charge of the tournament, along with members of the Rules Interpretation Committee, must automatically disqualify any student for violation of any rules including time limits. In the event that a student is disqualified, the Tabulating Committee, upon being notified of the disqualification, will record (1) no ranking number in that round nor (2) total score of said contestant on the score sheet. "DQ" will be written in the appropriate box of competition on the score sheet. Any previous round scores earned by the contestant prior to the violation, shall remain on the score sheet. The Tabulating Committee will adjust the rankings for the other contestants on the specific judge ballot(s) as though the disqualified contestant had never competed.

Proposed change:

In the paragraph above change "Disqualification" to "Penalty for Rules Violations". change "automatically disqualify" (in line 2) to "penalize" and delete the words "including time limits" (lines 2-3).

Insert the following prior to "In the event a student is disqualified".

If it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that a student committed any of the following rule violations the committee must consider disqualification:

- Plagiarizing
- Using unpublished material when published is required
- Not providing a script to the Contest Manager when required
- In Extemporaneous Speaking – preparation room violations including:
 - use of computer or internet
 - access to previous or other speakers' notes
 - exceeding word/symbols limit on note card
- In Creative Expression:
 - exceeding 20% limit from other sources
- In Great Speeches:
 - failing to meet 25% of own material
 - exceeding the 3 speech anthology limit
 - analyzing a speech that was not delivered in front of the author's intended audience
- In Extemporaneous Reading:
 - reading a story not actually drawn
- In Informative and Original Oratory:
 - exceeding the 10% direct quotation limit
 - violating the visual-aid and survey rules
- In Storytelling:
 - telling a story not actually drawn.

Any student who violates a rule not listed above will be dropped to the lowest possible rank in the round on each judge's ballot for the round in which it can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the infraction occurred. A student cannot be dropped lower than the lowest possible rank in the round. The drop in rank will be communicated to the tabulators by the rules committee. The tabulators will adjust the rankings for all contestants on each judge's ballot for that round.

"Lowest Possible Rank" Clarification: Some Section Tournaments have judges rank "all the way out" but then the tab room adjusts the ranks to a "5" and only look to the actual rank in the case of a tie. In this case, the "lowest rank" would mean the lowest possible rank according to that tournament's tabulation rules. This means that if a student breaks a rule in a round of 7 contestants, s/he would be given an actual rank of a 7. And for those tab rooms that adjust the ranks, this actual rank should be adjusted to a 5 and the 7 should only appear if a tie needs to be broken.

In the event that a student is disqualified, the Tabulating Committee, upon being notified of the disqualification, will record (1) no ranking number in that round nor (2) total score of said contestant on the score sheet. "DQ" will be written in the appropriate box of competition on the score sheet. Any previous round scores earned by the contestant prior to the violation, shall remain on the score sheet. The Tabulating Committee will adjust the rankings for the other contestants on the specific judge ballot(s) as though the disqualified contestant had never competed.

Rationale

Rules are meant to keep one contestant from gaining an unfair advantage over another. A penalty is meant to ensure that if the rule is not followed, an unfair advantage will not be allowed to the rule breaker; a penalty should take away the unfair advantage. However, a penalty should not be unnecessarily punitive. If a basketball player commits a foul, he is not immediately ejected from the game, but the player he fouls gets to shoot free throws or the fouled player's team gets to keep the ball. The unfair advantage is nullified, but the offending player is allowed to continue. Certainly, no speaker should gain an unfair advantage by going longer than the time allowed or by purposely cutting sections from extemporaneous reading cuts. These are good rules, but right now the penalty is too severe and does not fit the crime. Dropping a speaker to the lowest rank in the round would ensure that any unfair advantage would be nullified. Disqualification for going overtime or missing a word or two is too harsh a penalty. The harshness of it makes some people hesitant to enforce it. For example, a speaker at sections had "unintentionally" missed a word in Extemp Reading at his/her subsection contest, but was only given a warning. This action, which is very well-intended, demonstrates the fact that if the punishment is too harsh, too many do not enforce the rule because the punishment goes beyond fairness. We need fair consequences for our fair rules. The list of infractions that result in disqualification are all concrete ethical violations that reveal a preconceived and intentional desire to achieve a competitive advantage. Therefore, most would agree, they must be offenses that result in the harshest of consequences: disqualification.