

Proposal to Change the Penalty for Rules Violations for Speech

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”.

ANY STUDENT WHO VIOLATES A RULE WILL BE DROPPED TWO RANKINGS ON EACH JUDGE'S BALLOT FOR THAT ROUND. (A STUDENT CANNOT BE DROPPED LOWER THAN THE LOWEST POSSIBLE RANK IN THE ROUND.) THE DROP IN RANK WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO THE TABULATING COMMITTEE BY THE COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF THE TOURNAMENT ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF THE RULES INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE. THE TABULATING COMMITTEE WILL ADJUST THE RANKINGS FOR THE CONTESTANTS ON EACH JUDGE'S BALLOT FOR THAT ROUND. FOR SERIOUS, INTENTIONAL INFRACTIONS THE COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER DISQUALIFICATION.

The new paragraph would then read as follows:

D. Penalty for Rules Violations

The committee in charge of the tournament, along with members of the Rules Interpretation Committee, must penalize any student for violation of any rules. Any student who violates a rule will be dropped two rankings on each judge's ballot for that round. (A student cannot be dropped lower than the lowest possible rank in the round.) The drop in rank will be communicated to the tabulating committee by the committee in charge of the tournament along with members of the rules interpretation committee. The tabulating committee will adjust the rankings for the contestants on each judge's ballot for that round. For serious, intentional infractions the committee may consider disqualification. 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. Those are good rules, but right now the penalty is too severe. Dropping a speaker two ranks 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. I have heard that a speaker at sections had gone overtime 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, no one will want to enforce the rule because the punishment goes beyond fairness. We need fair consequence for these fair rules.