DSABC Tournament Organization Guide

Adapted from the Alberta Debate and Speech Association "Debate Tournament Organization Guide" to ensure compatibility with the styles and practices of the DSABC



Table of Contents

[I. Preliminary Work 2](#_Toc491422704)

[II. Tournament Staff 2](#_Toc491422705)

[III. Finding Judges 3](#_Toc491422706)

[IV. Materials 5](#_Toc491422707)

[V. Facilities 6](#_Toc491422708)

[VI. Setting Up the Tournament 7](#_Toc491422709)

[VII. Registration 8](#_Toc491422710)

[VIII. Tournament Day Activities 9](#_Toc491422711)

[IX. Important Papers 10](#_Toc491422712)

[X. Policy 11](#_Toc491422713)

[XI. Checklist 12](#_Toc491422714)

# Preliminary Work

1. Select a Venue
2. Select a Date
   * When selecting your date please consider the following:
     + That booking your event in consultation with your elected Regional Coordinator and the Official DSABC calendar will help to avoid conflicts with other tournaments in your area.
     + Two to three weeks between debate events provides enough time for adequate student preparation;
     + Long weekends are usually inappropriate due to prior commitments
     + Other important local events will affect the success of your event
3. Create a registration form where the applicants can indicate the:
   * Name of Team Members
   * Category of Team Entering
   * School
   * Sponsor Contact Info
   * Dietary Restrictions
4. Compile this information into an Invitation and submit it to the DSABC as soon as possible so that your event details can be distributed and published on the calendar

# Tournament Staff

1. Moderators/Timers
   * Each room assigned for debating should have a moderator/timer
     + If no moderator is available one should politely ask a member of the judging panel in that room whether they feel comfortable timing
   * Look to non-debating members of your club or even unrelated students
     + Debate experience is not usually necessary so long as an adequate briefing is given to the students beforehand
   * If your school has a program for requiring a certain number of volunteer hours this is usually a good way to motivate students, especially in younger grades

Each of these individuals should be briefed in advance regarding the timing of speeches and controlling the flow of debate. Scripts are available on the DSABC website under “Tournament Hosting Resources”

Moderators are responsible for timing and controlling the flow of debate, collecting the judges’ ballots, checking ballots for completeness, and conveying the ballots to the Tabs Room immediately after every round.

1. Food Staff
   * The number of people required to prepare food depends on the plans you have made. Appropriate amounts should always factor in students, moderators, judges, and any other tournament staff
   * Meals can be as simple as Subway™ or Pizza or as complex as arranging full meals through the school cafeteria or caterers
   * Look to student volunteers, extra moderators or even parents of students to assist you if possible
   * Whatever your plans - food costs should be completely covered in your registration fee. Establish your budget to cover yourself in the event people do not come.
2. Tabs & Assistants
   * Tabulations are most commonly done with a computer using one or both of the programs available on the DSABC website under “Tournament Hosting Resources”
   * It is often advisable for the individual in charge of tabulations to have several efficient helpers to assist with organizing, double checking and entering data.
   * It is recommended that, for large tournaments, a separate tabs operation be set up for junior and senior debate categories.

**Note: Experience has shown that great care must be taken with tabulations as both accuracy and speed are essential. This is an area where serious problems can occur!!**

# Finding Judges

* The DSABC uses different judging rules depending on the category of debate in use
  + Tournaments using a “Win/Loss” style of advancement must have an odd number of judges in each room
    - While **THREE** is the preferred amount, one highly skilled judge can be used in extreme circumstances
    - This is because under a WIN/LOSS model, an even number of judge may result in a tie which is not acceptable at such a tournament
  + Tournaments using a “Speaker Points” style of advancement do not NECESSARILY need an odd number of judges, as ties do not affect the outcome
    - However, **THREE** judges are still the preferred amount
* If you are running an Official DSABC event and are unsure of which style of advancement to use, feel free to ask a member of the DSABC
* Judges should not be in a room where they have a “conflict of interest”.
  + Examples of conflicts include any judge who has already seen the case to be presented before the tournament (i.e. a coach) or an immediate family member who may have difficulty being unbiased
  + Potential conflicts should be identified during tournament signup if possible to correct the situation before the debates begin.
* When setting a target number to recruit, always plan on having extras as a few judges will inevitably fail to turn up.
  + Your extras should be individuals who will not be offended should it turn out they are not needed (Extras could even be put into panels of 5)

**Many tournaments feature a Judging requirement which is often 1 judge per team but can be modified at the hosts discretion**

* A few ideas on obtaining judges include contacting:
  + Teachers in your school
  + Trustees and central office administrators
  + Parents of students in your school, by sending a letter home with students
  + Alumni debaters and speakers in your region
  + Coaches in your region who can supply you with names of judges they have used
  + Community service groups
  + School alumni
* Judges should be contacted well ahead of time, preferable **5-6 WEEKS** in order to increase the chances that they will not have prior commitments.
  + If individuals are only available for half a day make sure that they are very clear of their timing and that you make note of this and do not forget

Once you have confirmed Judges, keep in touch with them about once every two weeks   
(Some Judges have a habit of forgetting)

# Materials

* Most of the materials that you will need to run your tournament can be found on the DSABC website under “Resources” -> “Tournament Hosting”
  + Judges briefing PowerPoints
  + Scripts for moderators/timers and judges
  + Ballots for all DSABC events
  + Tabs Programs

Note: When preparing ballots, experience has shown that using different colored paper for each round makes it much easier for the TABS room to keep track of ballots and reduce errors. This kind of paper is often inexpensive and available at Staples™

* Trophies & Certificates
  + Generally, a trophy or medals are provided for the first-place team in each category, however, some tournaments provide medals for the top 3 or 5 teams
  + You may wish to arrange for permanent trophies that would return to your school to be awarded on an annual basis.
    - If this occurs, smaller “keeper” trophies or medals are still appropriate for first, and second place teams in each category.
  + Other Medals
    - A gold medal is generally given to the top speaker in each category of debate.
    - If possible, second and third place speakers should be given awards as well
      * Some tournaments may choose to give as many as 10 medals which can be decided at the organizers discretion
  + Certificates
    - More commonly, students or teams ranking lower than 3rd place may be provided with a medal, the number of which are again at the organizers discretion
* Signs & Directions
  + Signs are a good idea as they assist visitors to your school.
  + Beginning at the front door, signs should direct people to registration, Judges’, dining area, etc.
  + Even room numbers recorded in large stencil on the wall outside the room help people find their locations if the rooms are not intuitively laid out.
* Folders
  + A folder or envelope of material is essential for judges, debaters, moderators/timers, and for coaches.
  + The folder/envelope should contain the following items:
    - A Schedule of Events
    - Letter of greeting, outlining the role your school and the DSABC are playing in the overall event
  + Map of the school
  + The Draw if it is available at the onset of the tournament
  + List of participants and their team codes
  + List of sponsors, if applicable.
  + Judges, in addition to the above, will require the following items most of which are available from your DSABC Website
    - Judges Guide
    - Ballot packages
  + Moderators/Timers will also require:
    - Scripts

NOTE: Your Timers may need to be provided with stop watches as not all individuals may have phones or watches. Using clocks in classrooms is generally inadequate.

# Facilities

* Classrooms
  + Consider the following:
    - If you divide the number of teams in recent events hosted by schools in your area by two, this will give you a good estimate of how many classrooms are required for your event.
    - As the debate approaches, you can make adjustments in response to the number of entries received.
* An Office
  + You may need the intercom to make announcements, though this is not advised as a general rule due to interruption
  + Photocopiers/Printers
* A Tabs Room
  + This should be a private room for your TABS staff to concentrate.
  + Access to this room should be restricted to yourself, your TABS staff, and DSABC personnel only.
  + Unless invited, others should not be allowed access (As a general rule, coaches who have participants in the event should not have access
* Holding Areas
  + You should have 2/3 rooms of adequate size to hold tournament participants before, in-between, and after rounds
  + Ideally, you should have a holding room for Judges, Debaters, and Moderators/Timers
    - These will also serve as the sites for your briefing to be administered in the morning
  + The size of these room will be determined by tournament attendance in each of the three categories
* Lunchroom
  + If a lunch is to be served, you will require a facility of adequate size with tables and chairs.
  + Depending on the nature of the lunch, this area may require food handling capabilities (i.e. a cafeteria) – if not, the respective holding areas may be suitable for lunch service

# Setting Up the Tournament

* Setting up the Tab
  + Firstly, you must have a completed list of your confirmed attendees in an accessible format, usually a spreadsheet
  + Then, using our recommended Tabs Program: CHUTABS, the participants and judges should be manually entered into their respective fields on the application along with their school affiliation
  + As names are too long and cumbersome for the TAB, each team must be allocated a Team Code
    - These should be short but unique
      * i.e. UVSS1 for Upper Vancouver Secondary School Team 1
    - Make sure that your naming system is consistent without any duplicates or repeat use of codes for similar school names

* Creating a Draw
  + This is the document that tells debaters what room they should be in, what team they should debate, what side they are on, and at what time the round occurs.
  + Problems with the draw arise for a multitude of reasons:
    - If the draw is prepared to far in advance of the tournament it becomes useless if teams drop out unexpectedly
    - If you leave it to the last minute you may make mistakes, under pressure. This becomes apparent when you consider the criteria that must be fulfilled to produce a good draw. These criteria include the following
      1. Teams must debate both sides of the issue
      2. A team should never debate before the same judges twice unless they have begun a new topic and such a conflict is unavoidable
      3. A team should never debate the same team twice unless the size of the category makes this impossible and once again only on a new topic
  + Thankfully, these days Draw Preparation is almost entirely automatic! PHEW!
    - The DSABC strongly recommends using the TABS program: **ChuTab** -available on the DSABC website
    - This program facilitates automatic draw creation based on the participants that you have entered and features a variety of options to mitigate any of the issues outlined above

1. Registration

On the day of the tournament you will need reliable individuals to meet and register students, coaches, judges and others. For large tournaments, you will likely want to set up several tables for each class of participant and split these duties among several people.  
  
Their duties will include:

1. Cordial greetings
2. Accurately taking attendance
3. Providing folders or envelopes to participants if applicable
4. Directing people to assigned areas for coffee, juice, snacks / briefing
5. Answering questions / providing directions

The registration area should be large enough to handle crowds and have very clear signs posted. Organizers may want to have a large “Welcome” banner if the registration area is perhaps not the most easily accessible or easy to find.

# Tournament Day Activities

* Judges’ Briefing
  + As an organizer, your greatest concern will tend to focus on judging aspects. Needless to say, it would be ideal if your tournament was able to boast top notch, experienced judges in every room. As this will not usually be the case due to a variety of circumstances, it will be your job to make certain the judges you do have perform as well as possible.
  + Use the briefing PowerPoint available from on the DSABC website, then answer questions or add points thereafter.
  + It is always wise to ask if any judges have any “undeclared conflicts” that would preclude them from judging certain individuals at this point so that these can be noted and the draw modified if necessary
  + Here are some strong recommendations to ensure more credible judging standards.
    - Decrease their apprehension of their task and reinforce the importance of their involvement.
    - Go through the ballot once (team codes, student names, round number, speaker evaluation, decision and separation of ballot section for submission).
* Debater’s Briefing
  + A debater’s briefing should be scheduled just before the start of Round 1
  + This will allow you to do the following:
    - Note rules of behaviour
    - Convey greetings to participants
    - Make announcements
    - Answer questions
* Moderators/Timers Briefing
* Briefing is carried out by a tournament official before the debating begins, usually simultaneously with the judges briefing and/or debater’s welcome.
* This is crucial, particularly if the moderators/timers are not debaters.
* Walk the group through the script and address any questions or concerns to prevent confusion or backlogs later in your event
* TABS
  + At the end of each round, the information from the ballots must be relayed to the master tabulation program(s)
    - This allows you, the organizer, to determine final rankings of all participants both individually and by team
  + The process by which this information is compiled is fairly straight forward but care must be taken to assure accuracy. Make sure your all TABS assistants are briefed and understand the system completely - before the event begins.

\*\*In-depth resources for tabbing a tournament are available on the DSABC website\*\*

* Food
  + People attending a tournament usually have the following expectations regarding food:
    - Coffee and juice will be available in the morning, along with munchies such as donuts or muffins.
    - Lunch will be served -- Lunch need not be excessive or formal
    - If the tournament runs particularly long, dinner may also be a expectation

Note: You might consider providing foods for vegetarians, those with dietary sensitives, or those of varying religious backgrounds.

# Important Papers

* The Invitation
  + Ideally your invitation should be submitted to the DSABC **AT LEAST 6-8 weeks** prior to the event so that they can be distributed and put on the calendar
  + The invitation should include the following information:
    - The resolution (if applicable)
    - Date, schedule and address of event
    - Cost of Registration, accepted methods of payment, and indication of payment timeline
    - Registration deadline
    - Judging Requirement (if applicable)
    - Access to the registration form
* The object of a registration fee will be to help you break-even. The following factors should be considered when establishing that fee:
  + Lunch
  + Coffee and snacks
  + Xeroxing
  + Paper and folders
  + Awards

# Policy

* Protocol
  + You will want to be certain you are completely aware of all rules within the DSABC Policy and Rules Manual.
  + As you have the final say in any on-site decision during the tournament day, you will want to make sure that you know and can interpret the up to date rules as accurately as possible.
  + Often, an experienced member, alumnus or staff member will be around to advise you should you wish, but always refer back to the Policy and Rules Manual for consistency
  + Make sure, whoever advises you is also operating from the updated Policy and Rules Manual as well
* Sponsors
  + It may be worthwhile to pursue sponsorship for all or some part of your tournament.
  + Groups to consider approaching include:
    - Your principal or student’s union
    - Your P.T.A.
    - Local service groups (Rotary, Lions Club, Optimists, Knights of Columbus)
    - Local Media
    - Local Businesses
      * Chain Restaurants or Cafes in particular may have donation requirements that can be investigated

Cost reduction can occur through direct funding, sponsorship of awards, and/or goods in kind such as food stuffs. Remember to note their contribution in all folders and hand-outs, and thank them profusely in both spoken and written form. There is always another time

# Checklist

* Have you chosen a resolution that is suitable?
* Have you chosen a time that will attract the best response?
* Have you complied with school or division rules, booked the facility far enough in advance and have secured all the rooms you need?
* Have you secured sponsors?
* Are you using a resource person or people to address the debaters and if so, has the person been contacted in time?
* Have you assembled a reliable crew of moderators/timers?
* Do you have students to carry out incidental tasks on the day of the event?
* Have you printed the ballots, scripts and guides?
* Have you arranged meals and snacks?
* Have you found TABS Staff and helpers?
* Have you chosen familiarized yourself and other with the TABS program to be used?
* Have you designed and sent a complete registration form to the DSABC for distribution and publication to the calendar?
* Have you done any publicity?
* Have you made arrangements for trophies, medals or certificates?
* Have you arranged a registration area and fully trained a registration staff?
* Have you made up adequate directional and welcome signs?
* Have you assembled enough folders/envelopes for judges, debaters, moderators/timers, coaches and extras?
* Have you selected your judges carefully and secured a large enough number?
* Have you arranged time to adequately brief the judges and moderators?
* Is the Tab filled in with all relevant information prior to tournament day?
* Have you published a timetable?
* Have you constructed a draw?
* Have the judges been distributed appropriately?