



Rulebook



NHSDLC

National High School Debate League of China (NHSDLC) Rulebook

Academic Committee of the NHSDLC

Last Updated - August 24th, 2020

1 Introduction

This rulebook provides the fundamental rules that govern National High School Debate League of China (NHSDLC) tournaments.

There are three main purposes to the rules.

- First, the rules contribute to the smooth and effective running of tournaments.
- Second, the rules are designed to ensure competitive equity for all participants regardless of their school, grade, gender, and other ascriptive characteristics; the rules should foster a competitive experience where the quality of a team's debating should play an almost exclusive role in determining their competitive success.
- Third, the rules facilitate the maintenance of an educational debate environment. As an educational activity, participating in debate should aid the development of an academic skill set that helps debaters succeed.

This rulebook should not determine the winner or loser of a debate except in extreme circumstances. The primary role of the judge is to decide who wins the debate within the constraints of the rules. Judges cannot decide that a team has lost a debate for breaking the rules. While students and judges should be able to determine the application of rules to particular situations in a debate round on their own, if disagreement and confusion persists the relevant parties should immediately contact an NHSDLC staff member. NHSDLC staff members will regularly wear a lanyard with “**Organizing Committee**” written on it. Complaints should be handled similarly.

The Tournament Director **always** has ultimate discretion for what consequences, if any, should be administered for rule infractions. Consequences will vary depending on the severity of the situation.

In extreme cases, The tournament director may determine that a debater should lose a round, be disqualified from the tournament, or be removed from the national ranking. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse and will not mitigate potential consequences.

This rulebook will focus on the rules of the NHSDLC debate circuit instead of concentrating more broadly on the norms that shape the circuit. Rules mandate what debaters must do. In contrast, norms influence the debate community's sense of what debaters should do. This is because the NHSDLC believes that the debate community should play an important role in deciding norms for itself.

Debaters are welcome to come to the tab room to seek clarification about results. However, appeals of a judgement are almost never considered. All judgements are final unless there is a reason to believe discrimination occurred or that a code was misrecorded.

This rulebook includes both an English and Chinese translation. The English translation has priority in the case of any discrepancies. All final decisions are up to the discretion of the individual tournament director.

2 Rules

2.1 Tournament Conduct

NHSDLC tournaments are a professional and safe environment. If any participant, judge, teacher, parent, person, or animal is exceptionally disruptive to this atmosphere, the NHSDLC reserves the right to remove them from the premises. Threats of violence, verbal abuse, discriminatory behavior, and acts that endanger anyone involved will not be tolerated. If a student is caught in possession of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or any other illicit substance they will be disqualified from the tournament and removed from the premises without refund of the entry fee.

NHSDLC staff have ultimate discretion in determining application of this rule and the nature of the corresponding consequences.

2.2 Off Limit Areas

Debaters are not allowed in the tab room or judge lounge except by express permission of the tournament director or other NHSDLC staff.

2.3 Event Switching

Debaters are not allowed to switch the debate event they registered after the tournament has begun unless the NHSDLC has made a clerical error. Debaters must compete in the event they registered in unless granted express permission by the tournament director.

2.4 Being On Time

Flight A students must arrive at their assigned room within 15 minutes of rounds being announced or they may forfeit the debate for being late. Flight B students must arrive at their assigned room within 45 minutes of the round's scheduled start time. NHSDLC staff should be notified if a team or a judge is not present in their room within 10 minutes of rounds being announced. Debaters should tell a volunteer or judge to contact NHSDLC staff. NHSDLC staff have ultimate discretion to determine if the team that was late has forfeited the debate.

If a team forfeits a debate due to tardiness, the other team should remain in their assigned room unless they are given permission to leave by NHSDLC staff. A new opponent will be arranged when possible. If a new opponent cannot be arranged, the other team will receive a bye. A bye counts as a win. **For the team receiving the bye, speaker points for the round are calculated by averaging a debater's speaker points from the rest of their preliminary debates. The team forfeiting will receive no speaker points for the round.**

2.5 Language

Debaters must communicate in English during speeches and crossfire. Judges are instructed to not evaluate arguments made in a different language. However, when communicating during preparation time debaters may use any language they prefer.

Students must debate the English text of the NHSDLC resolution. There is no official translation of the resolution. Therefore, any translations are not binding and are provided solely for the purpose of better informing observers and other community members.

2.6 Use of Electronics

Students may use electronic devices that contribute to the competition during a debate. Laptops, tablets, and similar devices are allowed. Cell phones may be used as timers. Downloaded translation apps may also be used. However, searching for information online, communicating with anyone electronically to gain a strategic advantage, or anything else that compromises the competitive integrity of the debate is strictly forbidden. The NHSDLC tournament director has ultimate discretion to determine the consequence depending on the situation. Communicating with parents or coaches for non-competitive purposes is discouraged but not prohibited. Accusations of external electronic communication will be taken seriously.

2.7 Spectating a Debate

Spectators are not allowed in preliminary debates. The only exception is if explicit permission is given by the NHSDLC tournament director.

Spectating elimination debates is fully permitted.

If a spectator is disruptive, disrespectful, or otherwise unduly detracts from the debate that is happening, they may be told to leave by participating debaters, judges, NHSDLC staff, or teachers. Spectators may not refuse.

2.8 Recording a Debate

Recording, through the capture of audio, video, transcription, and/or any other means outside of traditional note-taking, preliminary debates is not allowed. Anyone caught with an audio or video recording of a preliminary debate will be forced to delete them by NHSDLC staff.

The use of any online/offline transcription or text to speech devices is strictly prohibited during both preliminary and elimination debates. The use of transcription software/hardware is regarded as academic dishonesty by the NHSDLC's Academic Committee.

Recording elimination rounds is strictly prohibited unless permission is explicitly given by both teams and participating judges. If there are multiple judges, all judges must consent to the debate being recorded. If any spectator or participant records the debate without first receiving permission, they will be forced to delete their recordings by NHSDLC staff. If they refuse, they will not be allowed to view other debates and may be subject to other penalties at the discretion of NHSDLC staff.

The exception to this rule is during the finals debate. Recording the finals debate is permitted and does not require permission from debaters or judges.

Short videos on WeChat by classmates, parents recording a single speech by their child, and coaches recording strategically valuable portions of a debate are drastically different situations. As such, the NHSDLC will apply this rule within reason. However, it is heavily encouraged to ask all debaters involved before a debate begins if one wishes to record more than a short video. Short videos are defined as videos under 20 seconds.

Participating teams always have the right to request that audience members stop recording during a debate, even if they provided permission before the debate. Audience members may not refuse.

2.9 Speech Time & Prep Time

Debaters must obey the time limits of speeches, crossfire, and preparation time. When time is up, debaters may finish a sentence they have already begun speaking, but may not begin a new one. Any ambiguity in what reasonably constitutes a concluding sentence will be determined by the judge.

Preparation time may be taken before or after any speech. It may not be taken during a speech or crossfire. Debaters can request to take any amount of

preparation time they want as long as it is within their allotted time. Judges and volunteers will keep track of preparation time for advisory purposes, but teams are also required to keep track of their own time and are responsible in the case of any errors. Debaters may utilize their mobile phones to keep time provided they are not using their phones to access the Internet during the debate.

2.10 Speaker Roles

Every debater must either be the first speaker or the second speaker. The first speaker should give constructive and summary. The second speaker should give the rebuttal and final focus. If a debater gives both the summary and final focus they may still win the debate, but NHSDLC staff should be notified immediately. The consequence will vary by circumstance.

2.10.1 If a Team Debates on the Wrong Side

Rarely, a team will accidentally debate on the wrong side of the resolution., e.g. if they were assigned PRO by the coin flip and they debate as if they were CON. Mistakes happen.

If teams and/or the judge do not recognize and mention this before the first rebuttal speech, the team arguing for the wrong side of the resolution cannot win the debate. They cannot win even if they debate better. They are not permitted to win even if they start arguing for the correct side after the constructive speech. Speaker points should be assigned according to the quality of debating that occurred. This means low point wins are possible in this situation.

If teams and/or the judge do recognize and mention this before the first rebuttal speech, the judge should contact NHSDLC staff promptly. NHSDLC staff will determine if the mistaken team will be allowed to redo their constructive speech with the case that correctly defends the side of the resolution they were assigned to by the coin flip. This determination will be heavily influenced by whether there is time in the schedule for the redo.

NHSDLC staff will give explicit approval to redo the constructive speech in select circumstances. If the redo is approved, it should happen promptly and the rest of the debate should occur as if the constructive redo happened originally. If explicit approval is not given, the team that argued for the wrong side of the resolution will automatically lose the debate. Speaker points should be assigned according to the quality of debating that occurred, which means low point wins are also possible in this situation.

2.11 Crossfire

Team A asks the first question in each crossfire. It is within the judge's jurisdiction to decrease speaker points if team B breaks this rule.

Talking over opponents, being rude, not answering questions, and similar behavior is not against the rules, but it is within a judge's jurisdiction to penalize speaker points in response to such behavior.

2.12 Assisting Partners

Debaters are allowed to assist their partners during crossfire and speeches, but judges are instructed to only evaluate the words of the assigned speaker. It is within a judge's jurisdiction to penalize speaker points of a team for assisting each other in an excessive manner during each other's crossfire or speeches.

2.13 New Arguments in the Final Focus

Judges are instructed to not evaluate arguments that are new in the final focus. New arguments are distinct claims or responses that are not restatements of ideas already mentioned in the debate. Examples of new arguments include, but are not limited to, new contentions and refuting an argument that was not already refuted.

The prohibition of new arguments does not mean that debaters are required to only repeat what was said before in the final focus. Debaters are encouraged to provide new analysis by telling the judge things like who is winning on each issue and why based on analyzing arguments made previously in the debate, which issues are the most important, etc.

2.14 Eligibility to Advance to Elimination Debates

Both partners of a team must debate with each other in every preliminary debate to be eligible to advance into the elimination rounds.

The only exception to this is if one partner misses a single preliminary debate for a reason that is deemed acceptable by the NHSDLC tournament director. The NHSDLC tournament director may then give explicit approval for this team to be eligible to advance. However, the NHSDLC tournament director may not do this for any team that has debated more than one preliminary debate without both partners.

2.15 When a Partner Cannot Debate

Debaters must inform NHSDLC staff any time a partner cannot participate in a debate. Debaters should tell a volunteer or judge to contact NHSDLC staff.

If a debater does not participate in a debate they are assigned to they will receive 20 speaker points and the 4th rank in the debate. The exception to this is if both debaters do not participate, resulting in a forfeit.

A debater may be permitted to debate alone for one elimination debate and still be eligible to advance to later elimination rounds if they receive explicit approval from the NHSDLC tournament director. This approval will only be given in exceptional and reasonable circumstances.

2.16 Switching Partners

Switching partners during preliminary debates is not permitted unless a team receives explicit approval from the NHSDLC tournament director. This approval will only be given in exceptional and reasonable circumstances.

A team that switches partners during preliminary rounds is not eligible to break unless they receive explicit approval from the NHSDLC tournament director. This approval will only be given in exceptional and reasonable circumstances and cannot be given if the relevant debaters have participated in more than one debate.

Switching partners is not permitted during elimination debates. This is not allowed in any circumstances.

2.17 Using Evidence in a Debate

Evidence may be utilized in a debate round either by providing a direct quote from the evidence or paraphrasing.

Upon introducing a piece of evidence, a debater should say at least the last name of the author, a short description of their qualifications on the subject, and the year of publication. If the evidence is written by an organization (a governmental body, think tank, university department, etc.), debaters may list the organization's name instead of a single author. If a piece of evidence has two authors both of their names should be listed. If a piece of evidence has three or more authors a debater may just say the most senior author's name followed by "et al," a Latin abbreviation meaning "and others."

For example, if a piece of evidence has 3 or more authors and the evidence is being paraphrased, a debater might say:

According to Kaisa Snellman et al in 2015, an economic sociologist and assistant professor of organizational behavior at INSEAD, participating in extracurricular activities like debate is positively associated with higher educational and professional success. This is because they help develop soft skills like teamwork, communication and perseverance. These skills are important in our increasingly competitive and knowledge-driven economy.

Or, if a piece of evidence is from an organization and the debaters are directly quoting it:

According to the National Center for Health Statistics in 2017, the principal health statistics agency of the US, “Heart disease and cancer have remained the top two leading causes of death for the past 40 years in the US.” Heart disease is responsible for “23.4% of deaths in 2015” and cancer is responsible for “22% of deaths in 2015.”

2.18 Having Evidence “In Context” or “In Full”

A team must have any paragraph that their evidence paraphrases or directly quotes ready if their opponent asks to view their evidence “in context” or “in full.” These paragraphs should be the original, unmodified version.

For example, for the National Center for Health Statistics evidence, the paragraphs “in full” that were directly quoted from are:

Heart disease and cancer have remained the top two leading causes of death for the past 40 years.

And

“In 1975, the five leading causes of death were heart disease, cancer, stroke, unintentional injuries, and influenza and pneumonia. In 2015, the five leading causes of death were heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, unintentional injuries, and stroke. Throughout 1975–2015, heart disease and cancer remained the top two leading causes of death. The age-adjusted death rate for heart disease declined during 1975–2011, and then stabilized during 2011–2015 (23.4% of deaths in 2015). The age-adjusted death rate for cancer increased during 1975–1990, followed by periods of stability and decline during 1990–2000, and finally a steady decline during 2000–2015 (22.0% of deaths in 2015). Greater declines in heart disease than cancer mortality during 1975–2015 have narrowed the gap between heart disease and cancer deaths.”

It is helpful, but not required, to highlight the direct quotes that were utilized. Similarly, the specific sentences that were paraphrased may be highlighted.

If a team is unable to provide their evidence in full, judges are instructed to weigh the argument made in the evidence as if it was not supported by evidence.

2.19 Citing Evidence in a Debate

Debaters must provide full citations for each piece of evidence they read. This citation must include the author or source name, their qualifications, the title of the piece of evidence, the most specific date of publication available, the page numbers used, and the URL if the evidence is available online. If the piece of evidence is from a journal, the citation should also include the name of the journal and the relevant issue and volume information. If the evidence is only

available behind a paywall, the URL of the most relevant and accessible website page should be provided.

These citations should be in the footnotes or endnotes.

For example:

Snellman et al, Economic Sociologist, Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior at INSEAD, “The Engagement Gap: Social Mobility and Extracurricular Participation among American Youth,” December 10, 2014, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 657, Issue 1, 2015, pages 197–204, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002716214548398>

National Center for Health Statistics, a part of the CDC and the US Department of Health and Human Services, “Health, United States, 2016: With Chartbook on Long-Term Trends in Health,” May 2017, page 18, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/abus/abus16.pdf019>

If a team’s citation is missing key information, judges are instructed to weigh the argument made with the missing information in mind. For example, if a citation is missing everything except the author’s name, the argument made in a piece of evidence may be evaluated as if it was not backed up by evidence. Judges have discretion in determining the relative importance of the missing information and its effect on their evaluation of a piece of evidence.

2.20 Viewing an Opponent’s Written Material

A debater may ask to see their opponents’ case, evidence, blocks and any other material that was written before the debate round started. They may only ask to see material that has been read during the debate. Their opponents cannot refuse to show this material upon being asked.

Debaters may only ask during a crossfire that they are participating in and during their own preparation time. If a team wants to view their opponent’s written material but their opponent is using preparation time, the team must wait until their opponent concludes their preparation time, start their own preparation time, and then ask to view the material.

If crossfire or preparation time is not already running, time starts upon asking to view the evidence. Time does not pause when an opponent is looking for their evidence or case.

A debater that is not participating during crossfire may provide and receive material that their partner or opponents asked for. They may also read evidence that their partner asked for.

A debater may also ask to see their opponents’ evidence “in context” or “in full.” If a piece of evidence is a direct quote, the opponents must provide the full paragraph that the direct quote is from. If a piece of evidence paraphrases something, the opponents must provide the full paragraphs that have been paraphrased.

Debaters should share their written material either by having a printed copy or showing it on their laptop.

It is encouraged to have a printed copy of these paragraphs to simplify showing evidence. If evidence is shown on a laptop, both teams should be respectful of each other's time. The debater reading the evidence should have time to process the information. However, they should not keep the laptop for an excessive amount of time so their opponent can continue preparing with their laptop.

2.21 Plagiarism and Evidence Falsification

According to dictionary.com, plagiarism is “an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author.” Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses in academia, regularly triggering expulsions and destroying the reputations of those that are caught engaging in it.

Evidence falsification is the act of heavily misrepresenting a piece of evidence or creating a fake piece of evidence. It is lying to opponents and judges by presenting either of these cases as legitimate.

The NHSDLC takes these acts of academic dishonesty seriously. Debate is an academic competition that strives to ensure competitive equity for all involved. Therefore, if a team is caught engaging in either academically dishonest practice the NHSDLC tournament director has the ability to disqualify them from the tournament. If the case is particularly egregious, the team may also be barred from engaging in any future NHSDLC competitions.

If a debater feels that they have witnessed a case of academic dishonesty they should contact a NHSDLC staff member as soon as possible.

The NHSDLC recognizes that correctly citing evidence is a new skill for many and that mistakes happen. Therefore, the NHSDLC tournament director has ultimate discretion in determining the scope of the consequence.