



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DEBATING LEAGUE
INCORPORATED

2020 WADL Schools Debating Competition

COMPETITION RULES

Table of Contents

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| REGISTRATION AND DRAW RELEASE | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| GENERAL COMPETITION RULES | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| NOVICE/JUNIOR/SENIOR COMPETITION RULES | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| FINALS SERIES RULES | - | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| FORFEITS AND POSTPONEMENTS | - | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| DUTIES OF INVOLVED PARTIES | - | - | - | - | - | 7 |
| POLICY ON ELECTRONIC OR RECORDING DEVICES- | - | - | - | - | - | 8 |
| INTERPRETATIVE POWERS | - | - | - | - | - | 9 |

REGISTRATION AND DRAW RELEASE

1. Registration

- a. All schools must register by the closing date or risk not being able to participate in the competition.
- b. Each school is permitted to register a maximum of ten teams per competition level (i.e. ten teams in the Novice competition, ten teams in the Junior competition and ten teams in the Senior competition).
 - i. i. If a school wishes to register more than ten teams in a competition level they must have prior approval from the Chief Administrative Officer of the league.
- c. Schools may be allocated fewer teams than requested during registration due to venue capacity issues or a disproportionate number of teams from that school at a particular venue.
- d. The final draw must be published at least one week before the first debate is due to take place.
- e. Once the final draw is published, no changes can be made to the venue allocations and no additional teams may be registered.
- f. Schools will be invoiced for the number of teams appearing in the final published draw.
- g. Students may only debate if they are currently enrolled in and attending a high school, senior school or middle school.
 - i. i. If any other organisation/individual wishes to register a team, they require prior approval from the WADL Executive.

GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

2. Composition of teams

- a. Each team must have a minimum of three members with a maximum of six.
- b. Students may only debate once in each round.
- c. Students must debate in the same team for the entire competition.
- d. All students in a team must represent the same school/education institution or educational group.
- e. Students in Years 7 and 8 must debate in the Novice competition.
- f. Students in Years 9 and 10 must debate in the Junior competition.
- g. Students in Years 11 and 12 must debate in the Senior competition.

- h. Notwithstanding Rules 2 (d) and 2 (e), students may debate in a higher competition level than their school year stipulates with prior approval from the Chief Administrative Officer.
- i. Failure to comply with Rules 2 (a) - 2 (g) will result in the ineligibility of the team of the offending student(s) to compete in the finals.

3. General Rules

- a. Each team will comprise of a minimum of three speakers, each of whom may only speak once during a debate - teams with members who speak more than once during a debate will have to forfeit that debate.
- b. The decision of the adjudicator is final and may not be overturned or changed once announced.

4. Conduct During Debates

- a. Teams may only have three speakers who sit at the bench during a debate. Each speaker may only speak once throughout the debate.
 - i. i. If a team fails to comply they must forfeit that debate
- b. Speakers must speak from paper or palm cards and cannot keep or take notes on electronic devices.
- c. Speakers may use their phones to time themselves and other speakers but may only do so once the adjudicator has checked that their devices have been switched to 'Aeroplane Mode' and are on 'Silent'.
- d. Speakers may only speak for the allowed time - after which the adjudicator may interrupt or stop the speaker during their speech. Material given after the final double bell will not be considered in the final adjudication. Please see Sections 5-7 for the time limits for each competition level.
- e. Speakers must behave in a respectful manner towards other speakers, chairperson/timekeeper, adjudicator and audience. If an adjudicator sees speakers behaving in a way that would compromise the ability of any party present to feel safe and respected, the adjudicator may ask the speaker to terminate their speech and sit down.
- f. Photography and videography of debates is strictly prohibited with the exception of WADL volunteers who have gained written consent from the parties involved.

NOVICE/JUNIOR/SENIOR COMPETITION RULES

5. Novice Rules

- a. Speakers will speak for four minutes with a single warning bell at three minutes and a final double bell at four minutes.
- b. All debates are prepared and students will be aware of the topic no less than one week before the debate is scheduled.

6. Junior Rules

- a. Speaker will speak for five minutes with a single warning bell at one and four minutes and a final double bell at five minutes.
- b. Students may offer the opposing team's speaker points of information (POIs) between the first and second bell, speakers must accept one POI from the opposition per speech. Each student must offer at least one POI during each of the opposing team's speeches.
- c. Rounds 1 and 2 will be prepared debates, for which students will be aware of the topic no later than one week before the debate is scheduled.
- d. Rounds 3 to 6 will be impromptu debates.

7. Senior Rules

- a. Speaker will speak for seven minutes with a single warning bell at one and six minutes and a final double bell at seven minutes.
- b. Students may offer the opposing team's speaker points of information (POIs) between the first and second bell, speakers must accept two POIs from the opposition per speech. Each student must offer at least two POIs during each of the opposing team's speeches.
- c. Rounds 1 and 2 will be prepared debates, for which students will be aware of the topic no later than one week before the debate is scheduled.
- d. Rounds 3 to 6 will be impromptu debates.

8. Points of Information

- a. Points of information may only be offered between the first and second bell.
- b. Adjudicators may end any point of information that takes longer than 15 seconds.

9. Impromptu Rules

- a. Teams will receive the topic and side one hour before the debate.
- b. Separate rooms will be provided for each team.

- c. Only four team members can be present during preparation.
- d. Students may bring paper, pens, a dictionary and a thesaurus to aid their preparation.
- e. Team members are prohibited from speaking to anyone other than members of their own team or the Head Adjudicator between receiving the topic and commencing the debate.
- f. All non-remedial electronic devices must be switched off/turned to aeroplane mode. Any student found to be using any electronic device during preparation time will be deemed to have used the equipment to prepare for the debate and will thus be penalised.
 - i. i. A violation of this rule will lead to the offending team's forfeiting of that debate and ineligibility to advance to the finals of the competition.

FINALS SERIES RULES

10. Determining Finalists

- a. During Rounds 1 to 6, points will be awarded as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Win (including by forfeit) | 2 Points |
| Loss | 1 Point |
| Forfeit | 0 Points |

- b. After the conclusion of Round 6, a list of finalists will be released which will include: the names of each qualifying team, their division, the number of points, their average winning margin and their average speaker scores.
 - a. To advance to Finals, a team must be either: the winner of its division or a wildcard.
 - b. To win its division, a team must complete Rounds 1 to 6 having scored the highest total number of points.
 - c. Where more than one team is tied for the highest number of points, the division winner is the team that won the debate between the two teams.
 - d. If Rule 10 (c) cannot identify the division winner, then the team with the highest winning margin is the division winner.
 - e. If Rule 10 (d) cannot identify the division winner, then the team with the highest average speaker scores is the division winner.

- f. The number of finals places in a competition level will either be 16 or 32, depending on the number of divisions in that competition level that year.
- g. If the number of divisions in a competition level is less than the number of teams that can qualify to the first round of finals, then wildcards will be selected to fill the remaining places.
- h. Wildcards may come from any division, and are the next highest-ranking teams after the division winners.
- i. If the number of divisions in a competition level exceeds the number of finals places, the lowest ranked division winners will be eliminated from the competition.

11. Finals

- a. The draw for each round of finals will be released no later than one week before the scheduled round.
- b. Quarterfinals and Semifinals debates will be judged by panels of three adjudicators.
- c. Grand Final debates will be judged by panels of five adjudicators.
- d. Adjudicator panels will come to a decision by a majority vote, with each adjudicator coming to a decision independently.
- e. Winnings teams progress to the following round of finals, losing teams are eliminated from the competition.
- f. Fixtures are created by pairing the highest-ranking team with the lowest ranking team, the second-highest ranking team with the second-lowest ranking team and so on.

FORFEITS AND POSTPONEMENTS

12. Forfeits

- a. Forfeits are to be avoided at all costs.
- b. If a team must forfeit a debate the forfeiting school must notify WADL before 48 hours of the scheduled time of the debate by submitting the Postponements and Forfeits Form found on the WADL website. The debating coordinator of the opposing school must be contacted personally by the postponing school by phone and in writing as soon as possible before the scheduled date of the debate.
- c. A team forfeits if:
 - i. All that team's members are not present 15 minutes after the scheduled time of the debate; or

- ii. They prepare the wrong side of the topic and are unable to re-prepare within 15 minutes; or
 - iii. All the team's members are not present 15 minutes after the impromptu topic is distributed (Junior and Senior only).
- d. Failure to follow these rules may lead to an unregistered forfeit. An unregistered forfeit is a forfeit that takes place without notice or notice with less than 48 hours.
 - i. Two unregistered forfeits will lead to the offending team to be deregistered from the competition. Deregistration from the competition in no way will indemnify the school from paying for the registration fees of the offending team.

13. Postponements

- a. Postponements must be avoided at all costs
- b. If a team must postpone a debate, the postponing school must notify WADL no less than one week prior to the debate by submitting the Postponements and Forfeits form found on the WADL website. The postponing school must gain written consent from the opposing school's debating coordinator with an agreed upon Make-Up Round date before they submit the online form.
- c. The opposing school may refuse to consent to a postponement, in which case the postponing school will be deemed to forfeit.
- d. In the event that the opposing school cannot attend the date(s) proposed by the postponing school, the postponing team will be deemed to forfeit.
- e. It is expected that schools communicate between themselves when requesting and organising postponements. In the event that these communications break down, the Chief Administrative Officer will have the final decision regarding a postponement.
- f. Any team unable to debate a postponed debate during a Make-Up Round night will be deemed to have forfeited the debate, regardless of which team initially requested the postponement.
- g. A debate in the finals series may not be postponed.
- h. The opposing school must expressly state whether they consent to a postponement. Where a school has used all reasonable efforts to contact an opposing school and the opposing school fails to respond, the postponing school may contact the Chief Administrative Officer
- i. If a team wishes to withdraw the forfeit, they must gain written consent from the opposing team that they can attend the initial, scheduled debate.
- j. Teams cannot schedule more than 1 debate on a Make-Up Round night. This means if a team is postponing their debate or accepting a postponement

request, it is their responsibility to ensure that they have not scheduled multiple debates on the same Make-Up Round night.

- k. Finals debates cannot be postponed. Times can be changed with consent from both teams, but if one team cannot make the date on the draw they will have to forfeit
- l. The Chief Administrative Officer reserves the right to vary the above postponement requirements in exceptional circumstances. In the event of a dispute, the Chief Administrative Officer will arbitrate and their decision with the approval of the Executive will be final.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INVOLVED PARTIES

14. Chairperson and Timekeeper

- a. Each team will, where possible, bring a fourth team member to the debate for the purposes of chairing or timing the debate.
- b. The Chair will introduce the debate and the speakers according to the Chairperson's sheet.
- c. The Timekeeper will monitor time in the debate, ring bells at the appropriate time and notify the adjudicator of the speaking time of each debater.
- d. Both the Chair and the Timekeeper will act in a professional and impartial manner throughout the debate.

15. Host Schools

- a. The Host School will provide a venue for each debate, set up desks for each team, the Chair/Timekeeper and the adjudicator.
- b. Separate rooms will be provided for each team preparing an impromptu topic.
- c. The Host School will provide a timer and a bell for each debate.
- d. The Host School will prepare plastic sleeves containing chairperson sheets, adjudicator sheets, and scoresheets ready for each adjudicator to collect upon their arrival at the host school, or placed in rooms. At the end of the night each adjudicator will return their adjudication sheets and Chair's sheets to a designated central point and complete the master results sheet.
- e. The Host School will place signs on each preparation and debating room clearly indicating respectively which teams will be debating in that room or that the room is a preparation room.

16. Adjudicators

- a. The Adjudicator must comply with, and is subject to, the WADL Adjudication Procedure at Venues, Policy on Regulation of Adjudication and Dress Code.
- b. The Adjudicator will maintain order during the debate.
- c. The Adjudicator will adjudicate the debate in accordance with the WADL Debating Outline.
- d. At the conclusion of each debate the Adjudicator will announce the result and give reasons of no longer than 5 minutes for the decision.
- e. At the close of the debate the Adjudicator will be available, where time permits, to informally discuss with the students the strengths and weaknesses of their individual speeches.
- f. The Adjudicator will behave in a professional manner at all times.

POLICY ON USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES OR RECORDING DEVICES

17. Prohibition of recording debates

- a. 'Record' means to make any recording of sound, images or video by any device including cameras, mobile phones and video recorders.
- b. No person is permitted to record an adjudicator involved in a debate.
- c. No person is permitted to record a student involved in a debate, unless
 - i. The person has obtained the written permission of a parent or guardian of the student, or the person is the student's parent or guardian, and
 - ii. The person has obtained the written permission of the school which the student is representing.

18. Prohibition on use of Electronic Devices in Debates

- a. 'Electronic Devices' means any device that can be used for telecommunication, to process information or for signal processing and includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Laptops;
 - ii. Mobile Phones; and,
 - iii. Tablets;
- b. Where one or more students from a team uses an electronic device during a debate, or during impromptu preparation, their team will be deemed to have forfeited the debate.
- c. Where a student requires an electronic device for translation or other individual special needs, their Coordinator should:

- i. Notify the Chief Operations Officer before the commencement of the WADL Schools Debating Competition
- ii. Await approval of an exemption of this rule by the WADL Executive
- iii. Take the letter of exemption to each debate during the Competition.

INTERPRETATIVE POWERS

19. Discretion of the WADL Chief Administrative Officer

- a. The Chief Administrative Officer retains the discretion to apply the above Rules with regard to the practicality of the situation, the merits of each case and the aims of the organisation.
- b. Any applications for special consideration to seek an exemption from any of the above rules will be reviewed by the Chief Administrative Officer who will decide whether to grant an exemption.
- c. If the Chief Administrative Officer is unable to come to form a decision on the application of the above rules, they may consult the WADL Executive for further advice.
- d. The decision of the WADL Executive is final.

20. Applying for Special Consideration

- a. If a team or school would like to seek an exemption for any of the rules above, they may apply for an exemption by submitting a written application or request to the WADL Chief Administrative Officer.
- b. The Chief Administrative Officer will, in a timely manner, acknowledge receipt of a written complaint and provide an expected timeframe for its resolution.

