

NASHVILLE CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL FORENSIC LEAGUE

JUDGING TIPS - BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER EACH ROUND

Before...

- Judging envelopes will be distributed prior to each round. Each envelope should contain the rules governing the category, a map of room assignments, a list of student codes in the order students will perform, the name(s) of judges assigned to each section, a blank ballot for each student, and a summary sheet. *Please confirm that all materials are included before going to your room.*
- Acquaint yourself with the description/rules of the category.
- To keep the tournament on schedule, please report to your room and begin each round as promptly as possible. The students should be waiting when you arrive.
- A warm greeting and few encouraging words will do much to relieve the fears of anxious students. If you are personally acquainted with any of the students, but feel you can be impartial, proceed with the round. If you feel uncomfortable - *especially if there is a student from your school* - go to the Tab Room *before* beginning the round.
- Be sure to turn off your cell phone and/or pager; remind students to do the same.
- Make sure all judges are present. If there is more than one judge, determine who will call the students to perform.
- Call off the codes in the order listed to ensure all students are present. If a student is missing, allow a short wait and then begin the round.
- Students who are "double-entered" in more than one category may arrive late, and should be allowed to leave early. They should also be allowed to perform earlier than students who are not double-entered.
- Students who *are not double-entered* but arrive after their code is called should perform last.
- If a student doesn't arrive by the end of a round, send a student who has performed to the Tab Room with the missing student's code, event and section number. *Do not dismiss the round until you know the missing student's status, and all students have performed.*

During...

- One at a time, call each code and ask the student for his/her name and the title of his/her selection. Fill out the top of a ballot and ask the student to begin.
- Time each performance, preferably using a stopwatch.
- Do not interrupt, or allow anyone else to interrupt a performance. Visitors are allowed, but *should not enter or leave* the room during a performance.
- Be attentive to each performer. Try to balance your attention between the student and taking notes/markings the ballot.
- Be objective regarding each performance, by setting aside your personal likes or opinions.
- Thank each student verbally and with your applause. *Do not give oral critiques.*

(over)

After...

- Dismiss the students with a word of thanks.
- On each ballot, offer as many substantive comments as possible. Try to balance praise with constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Arrive at your decisions independently. Do not confer with others.
- Assign a ranking and speaker points to each student. No ties are allowed.
- Transfer your rankings to a Summary Sheet beginning with first place.
- Be sure you have signed each ballot and the Summary Sheet – and that your name, and the name of your school, can be easily read.
- Do not discuss your decisions with anyone. (Even after a round, you may speak with someone who will judge the same students in a future round or tournament.)
- *Technical or interpretive questions - regarding performance rules, guidelines, or procedures - may be referred to the Judge's Counsel, located by the Tab Room.*