

National Catholic Forensic League - Public Forum Debate Judges' Information Sheet

NCFL rules for PFD differ from other leagues' rules. Please read this information carefully.

NCFL's Definition of PFD: A team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the resolution. The focus of the debate is a clash of ideas in a persuasive manner that can be understood by a "lay" judge. Good debaters should display logic and analysis. They should use evidence when needed. They should win their case and refute that of their opponents. They should communicate effectively, using the fundamentals of good speaking. There are no burdens on either side.

2019 NCFL Resolution: Resolved: U.S. Prisons ought to prioritize rehabilitation over deterrence for non-violent drug offenders.

Time Limits: There is NO COIN FLIP at the beginning of the round.

First Pro Constructive: 4 minutes
First Con Constructive: 4 minutes
Crossfire: 3 minutes (the Con asks the first question; thereafter, either debater can ask questions).
Second Pro: 4 minutes
Second Con: 4 minutes
Crossfire: 3 minutes (the Pro asks the first question; thereafter, either debater can ask questions).
First Pro Summary: 2 minutes
First Con Summary: 2 minutes
Grand Crossfire: 3 minutes (one member of the Pro team asks the first question; thereafter, any debater may ask questions).
Second Pro Final Focus: 2 minutes
Second Con Final Focus: 2 minute

Preparation Time: 2 minutes per team to be allocated at each team's discretion.

Double-Flighting: All rounds are double-flighted. Please be sure you are judging the correct pairings. If your B flight is together before your A flight, feel free to start the B flight first. Do NOT change pairings.

Judging Suggestions:

- All judges are expected to provide constructive comments. Please write comments during the round so that they can be returned quickly. Although electronic ballots can have comments added on later, getting comments on as the round goes along will be more efficient.
- Three-judge panels are being used in every round. When the pairings are released judges should report to their rooms directly. Do NOT start a round until all three judges are present. When you are ready, hit Start the Round so we know that you're underway.
- Please designate one of the judges to keep time for the debaters throughout the round.
- You may not award a Low-Point Win. Your winning team must match the higher points awarded.
- Do not confer or discuss your decision with the other judges in the round. Do not provide oral critiques. Do not disclose your decisions to other debaters, coaches, or judges at any time during the tournament.
- If you are the first judge listed, please make sure that all judges have hit Start the Round. After the round is complete, check that decisions have been submitted electronically as well.
- Forfeit time is 10 minutes after the posted starting time of the round on the pairings. If you believe a forfeit is appropriate, please send a student to the Tab Room (with the codes of all those present) for instructions. Do not award the forfeit on your own!

Speaker Points

- You must give speaker points to each debater. ***Please use the following scale, even if it is not your normal scale, to ensure a fair ranking of teams throughout the tournament:***

- **29-30:** The debater left no doubt about who won and is better than most debaters at this tournament
- **27-28:** The debater was effective and strategic, but made some minor mistakes
- **25-26:** The debater was prepared, but made some strategic errors in the round
- **23-24:** The debater made strategic errors or dropped key arguments and was not very persuasive
- **20-22:** The debater was not prepared and/or was hard to follow and needs significant improvement
- **Below 20:** The debater was rude, used foul language, and/or did not follow instructions when provided by the judges

Electronic Devices: The use of computers, electronic storage and retrieval devices is allowed. Connectivity for search and retrieval is permitted. Electronic communication is permitted only with the assigned judges and competitors *inside* the competition room. Judges should remind all participants and observers that all cell phones are silenced before the round begins.

Start Rounds Quickly: All judges should report to their assigned room immediately. All eight students assigned to each room should report to the room immediately. The B Flight students should wait outside the room until the A Flight has begun and report back to the room at least ten minutes before the scheduled start of the B Flight. If an A Flight student is missing and both B Flight teams are present, please start the B Flight debate and run the A Flight debate in the second flight timeslot.

Excerpts from the NCFL By-Laws:

--In making the decision, the judges should ask the following questions:

- a. Which team is more persuasive?
- b. Did the debaters back up their assertions with logical thinking and evidence when needed?
- c. Were the debaters fair in their interpretation of the resolution and one another's statements?
- d. Were the arguments intelligent? Did the debaters try to use many weak arguments instead of a few solid ones?
- e. Did the debaters speak in such a way that their ideas were understandable?
- f. Were the debaters courteous and professional?

--The judges should distance themselves from the content of the debate. Personal values of the judges should not influence the decisions.

--Comments on the ballots should be analytical. Sarcasm should not be used. On the ballot, the reasons for the decision should be kept separate from other critiques.

--Judges are prohibited from reading any materials presented in any speech unless falsification is suggested by the opponent and the original source in question is available in the round. The reading of complete citations is required only when requested by the opponent.

Other Guidelines:

Since this is a debate, clash is necessary. It may be direct clash or clash by opposing principles. Thus, in this debate the arguments do not necessarily have to match point-for-point. Good judges make decisions only on what was debated by the contestants. If the judges consider an argument to be flawed, but the opponent does not refute it, the original argument must stand. If, however, there is a clash, then the judges decide which argument is more persuasive.

Ask for Assistance. If you have questions or believe an error has been made, please ask. We can only solve a problem if we know about it. The tab room staff is committed to running an efficient, on-time, and error-free tournament.

Thank you for your help in judging today and your cooperation with the staff. With your assistance we will do our best to be on schedule.