

Leadership



Competition and Rules Leadership Committee September Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2024

The NSDA Competition and Rules Leadership Committee held their virtual meeting September 17, 2024. In attendance were Byron Arthur, Janelle Brown, Lori Crews, Jyleesa Hampton, James Harris, David Huston, Adam Jacobi, Kelley Kirkpatrick, Kerry Konda, Kim Lenger, Xavier Liu, Renee Motter, Jay Rye, George Tennison, Elisabeth Venetiou, Chase Williams, and David Yastremski.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

ONBOARDING

The Competition and Rules Leadership Committee discussed the scope of their role, committee meeting processes, and expectations for members. The group also reviewed the 2024-2025 strategic plan that outlines the goals of the Association in the next school year.

SUBCOMMITTEE SELECTION

A majority of Competition and Rules Leadership Committee work will take place in subcommittees. The group selected the following subcommittee focus areas based on the strategic plan: Honor Society/Recognition, Middle School/Novice Opportunities, Coach Recruitment/New Coach Development, and National Tournament Affordability. These subcommittees will be supplemented with additional coach members and begin their work in 2024-2025.

ELECTRONIC VISUAL AIDS IN INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

Currently, the *High School Unified Manual* rules on Informative Speaking state, "During the presentation, no

electronic equipment is permitted. Electronic equipment is defined as any object requiring an electrical cord, battery, or solar power to operate it (projectors, cell phones, radios, iPads, computers, etc.)." The Competition and Rules Leadership Committee assessed a member-submitted proposal to allow students in Informative Speaking to use electronic equipment as part of their visual aids. The group discussed concerns that allowing electronic visual aids may widen the gap between well-resourced and under-resourced schools and students, impose additional burdens on host sites, and alter the way Informative Speaking is judged. The committee decided not to make any changes to the current rules at this time.

SCOUTING RULE

Moved by Rye, seconded by Hampton:

"Remove the line stating 'scouting is strongly discouraged' from the *High School Unified Manual* and charge the national office staff with addressing decorum related to observing debates in the Code of Conduct."

Passed: 14-2

Aye: Arthur, Huston, Brown, Crews, Hampton, Harris, Kirkpatrick, Lenger, Liu, Rye, Tennison, Venetiou, Williams, Yastremski

No: Konda, Motter

Currently, the *High School Unified Manual* states that "scouting is strongly discouraged." The Competition and Rules Leadership Committee assessed a member-submitted proposal to change the scouting rule to clarify whether schools should be penalized for scouting. The group voted to remove this line from the manual, meaning that scouting is no longer discouraged at NSDA events. A majority of the group agreed that debate activities should prioritize open information and

education, which includes encouraging participants to observe and flow debates. The committee also acknowledged that there are times when behaviors among teams who are scouting can be intimidating or work against building community. NSDA staff will work to create resources for best practices related to decorum while observing debates.

EQUITY PAUSE

The Competition Rules Board used the [NSDA Equity Lens](#) to reflect on the nature of their meeting deliberations and whether their decisions and decision-

making processes are transparent, accountable, and reflect the organization's core value of equity.

ADJOURN

Moved by Brown, seconded by Liu:

“Adjourn.”

Passed: 16-0 (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Crews, Hampton, Harris, Kirkpatrick, Konda, Lenger, Liu, Motter, Rye, Tennison, Venetiou, Williams, Yastremski)

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. Tuesday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

We want to hear from you! Send your feedback to lauren.burdt@speechanddebate.org.