

# The Loomis Chaffee Debate Society

## Invitation for the Loomis Chaffee Invitational Debate tournament to be held online January 17, 2021

12/23/2020

Fellow Debaters,

We are pleased to invite you to the 39th annual Loomis Chaffee School Debate Tournament to be held online Sunday, January 17, 2021. A schedule of events is given at the end of this letter. The tournament is one of several sponsored throughout the year by various members of DANEIS (The Debating Association of New England Independent Schools). Schools will be limited to a maximum of two four-person teams – one in each division advanced and novice.

**All competitors will, over the course of the day debate both sides of a policy resolution which will be released the morning of the debate shortly after opening announcements. We will at that point supply each debater and judge with a prepared a packet of information and articles (approximately 10 to 12 pages) relevant to the resolution. Shortly after the release of the packet and a few general remarks, debaters will join breakout rooms by school to work together for one hour with the packet before the rounds of debate begin. Debaters should not use web searches to further research the topic. The material in the 10 to 12 page packet should be sufficient to build the case. Any use of the internet to conduct research can result in disqualification. This way, teams have access to exactly the same information, so the debates will be assessing how well debaters can work with the given information to produce & defend cogent, persuasive arguments on both sides of the issue. During the time that debaters prepare their cases, judges will meet in the main zoom room to review judging requirements for the tournament. After the one hour preparation period (and shorter judges meeting), the preparation breakout rooms will close and all judges and debaters will rejoin the main zoom room for the release of the schedule of the three rounds of competition. During the first two rounds each two-person team will debate both sides of the resolution (“A” teams debate Aff in round 1 and Neg. in round 2, “B” teams debate Neg in round 1 and Aff in round 2). in the third round the side will be decided in the room by coin flip if there is not mutual agreement.**

The affirmative side has an obligation to define the terms at the start of the debate, but, of course, in a way that allows for good debate to take place. Since this is most likely a policy change debate the affirmative case should include a sketch of a plan to implement that change. For a more complete discussion of affirmative and negative responsibilities please refer to the judging overview at the end of this document.

Please note, again, that the tournament is a switch-side tournament, meaning that over the course of the day each 2-person team will debate on both sides of the resolution. Each 4-person team will consist of one 2-person team (the ‘A’ group) which debates the first round on affirmative and the second on negative, and another 2-person team (the ‘B’ group) which debates the first round on negative and the second on affirmative. Sides for the third round will be decided by coin flip.

In both the Novice and Advanced divisions the format of the debates will be 6-minute constructive speeches, 3 minute cross examinations, and 4-minute rebuttals. **Every school should bring a judge for each 4-person team they enter. We have no objections to experienced, upper level student debaters serving as judges in the novice division, but adults should judge in the advanced division. We make NO promise to supply extra judges. We also do not want any debaters to debate without a partner.**

While there is great value in researching a topic over a long period of time and working to refine arguments over several weeks, we think there is also plenty of value in the skill needed in this tournament to quickly analyze and process a limited body of information in order to build an argument that’s grounded with evidence that had just become available to you. Over the course of the day, in debating both sides of this issue, you get the chance to refine your thinking on the topic. We expect that while some may miss the opportunity to do extensive, prolonged research, many others will probably appreciate not having the research burden in the middle of January. In short, we hope that this format preserves much of what is

positive in prepared, switch-side, cross-ex tournaments while easing the sometimes difficult research burden at this busy time of year.

For our planning we ask that you let us know by January 12 whether your school plans to participate in this year's virtual tournament and, if so, whether you plan to enter a four person team in both divisions (Adv and Nov) or only in one (please specify if only in one). We ask that the names of the debaters and judges be sent to us by January 14 at the latest. If you are able to commit to the number of teams earlier please do so, and as soon as you are able to pass along the names of the participants it would also help greatly if you could do that.

Finally, please make sure that all of the participants from your school (debaters and judges) are familiar with how to change their name on zoom. It would also be helpful if you could have all participants using the latest version of zoom which allows participants to choose the zoom breakout room (earlier versions did not have that feature). We can assign those who can't get themselves to a breakout room – but things can be processed even more efficiently when people can join the appropriate breakout room for debate rounds themselves.

Sincerely,

Curt Robison (Adviser to the Loomis Chaffee Debate Society)  
The Loomis Chaffee School  
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e-mail [curt\\_robison@loomis.org](mailto:curt_robison@loomis.org) (preferred form of communication)

office phone 860 687 6122 (feel free to leave a voice mail day or night)  
cell phone (860) 796 4120. (especially critical on the day of the tournament)

## **Note for judges:**

**All the judges that you are bringing should have read the judging overview document that follows in preparation for judging at the tournament. This document should help to answer many of the questions new judges might have - we can then focus more on tournament logistics during the briefing prior to the debates assuming that everyone has read through this material. All judges this year should also be familiar with using zoom and how to change their zoom name as well as how to use the chat feature where links to necessary documents will appear.**

**Scroll to the next page for the schedule of events:**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

10:00 Opening announcements, changing of screen names to include assigned codes, and finally the release of the resolution and information packet;

10:15 Open up breakout rooms for each school for the one-hour prep period.

10:20 Judges meeting in the main zoom room (after it has been cleared of debaters into the prep rooms). In addition to remarks about judging debate, we'll also have information about how to get, fill out and submit the online ballots for each round.

11:20 All debaters and judges assemble once again in the main room (the breakout rooms will automatically close after an hour) for the release of the schedule and any questions involving the schedule.

11:30 Round 1 begins (breakout rooms opened for round 1) – Judges should submit their completed ballots by 1:00 PM. ('A' teams on Aff, 'B' teams on Neg.)

1:00 Round 2: Reassemble all debaters and judges again in the main room for the assignment into the round 2 breakout rooms. – Round 2 begins as soon as all participants (4 debaters and a judge) are assembled into the appropriate round 2 breakout room ('B' teams on Aff, 'A' teams on Neg). Judges should submit their completed ballots by 2:30 PM.

2:30 Round 3: Reassemble all debaters and judges into the main room for assignment into the third and final round. Round 3 begins as soon as all participants (4 debaters and a judge) are assembled into the appropriate round 3 breakout room. (For round 3 a coin flip decides sides.)

FORMAT OF THE DEBATES

first affirmative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by second negative	3 mins.
first negative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by first affirmative	3 mins.
second affirmative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by first negative	3 mins.
second negative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by second affirmative	3 mins.

\*\*\*\*\* 3 minute rebuttal break \*\*\*\*\*

(Recall that there can be no new lines of argument presented in the rebuttal speeches.)

first negative rebuttal	4 mins.
first affirmative rebuttal	4 mins.
second negative rebuttal	4 mins.
second affirmative rebuttal	4 mins.

**Please email the information requested below back to us by Jan. 12 (earlier if possible) to indicate whether or not you are coming.**

\_\_\_\_\_ We won't be participating to the Jan. 17 tournament.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will be participating in the Jan. 17 tournament.

Circle the number of 4-person teams coming in each division:

We will bring (0, 1) 4-person novice team(s).

We will bring (0, 1) 4-person advanced team(s).

There is no charge for entering this tournament. We regret this year limiting the number of participants to two four-person teams from each school, but are pleased that we can still keep our 39 year tournament streak alive. We hope you will be able to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_

your school's name

\_\_\_\_\_

name of contact person

\_\_\_\_\_

phone of contact person

Send to:

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**Continue for Judging Overview**

# Loomis Chaffee Debate Society

## Judging Overview (policy debates)

### FORMAT OF THE DEBATES

first affirmative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by second negative	3 mins.
first negative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by first affirmative	3 mins.
second affirmative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by first negative	3 mins.
second negative constructive speech	6 mins.
cross examination by second affirmative	3 mins.

\*\*\*\*\* 3 minute rebuttal break \*\*\*\*\*

(Recall that there can be no new lines of argument presented in the rebuttal speeches.)

first negative rebuttal	4 mins.
first affirmative rebuttal	4 mins.
second negative rebuttal	4 mins.
second affirmative rebuttal	4 mins.

### Overview of generic debate responsibilities

In a policy change debate, both affirmative and negative teams have certain basic responsibilities which should be met to establish their case.

The affirmative team must

- 1) Make clear the terms of the resolution;
- 2) Provide some significant rationale for change from the status quo;
- 3) Provide some mechanism for implementing those changes (a plan).

The negative team has as its task to defeat the positive case put forward by the affirmative team. The particular approach to the topic offered by the affirmative and the structure of the affirmative case in large part determine what negative strategies are reasonable and effective in a given debate.

The affirmative team is said to have “the burden of proof” in the debate, which means that for the affirmative to win, their arguments must prevail against the objections raised by the negative team. If the arguments in the debate are very even – counterbalanced between the affirmative and negative sides – then the affirmative team has not met its burden of proof and the debate should be awarded to the negative side. Our league has chosen to honor this debate principle by adopting the convention that the team with the greater number of speaker points in the round must win and that in the rare cases of ties (the affirmative team and negative team has the same number of points) the debate is awarded to the negative team.

### Approaches to structuring affirmative and negative arguments in a policy change debate.

Judges should be very sensitive to the fact that both good and bad arguments can be structured in a variety of different ways. While some argument structures are, perhaps, more common than others, a judge should not presume that the common approach is the only acceptable approach. If an affirmative argument is

structured and organized in way which makes sense and can be followed and where it meets the obligation of successfully advocating for a policy, then it is a legitimate affirmative approach.

**Generic affirmative responsibilities:**

- 1) The affirmative should define (make clear) the terms of the resolution in a way which allows for a clear and fair debate.
- 2) The affirmative then must justify the adoption of the policy change proposed in the resolution by showing that the change is desirable from:
  - a) necessity (meets a need or solves a harm),
  - b) comparative advantage, or
  - c) the likely attainment of worthwhile goals.
- 3) The affirmative should propose a plan which is topical (in keeping with the resolution as defined) and show that the adoption of the plan attains the desired result without introducing any significant disadvantages.

**Needs case:** If the affirmative case structure is “needs” based then typically the first affirmative speaker spends most of his/her time establishing that there are “needs” or “harms” in the status quo (the world as it exists without the implementation of the plan) which are significant and must be addressed. Toward the end of the first speech or toward the beginning of the second affirmative constructive a plan would be introduced which should meet the need that had been documented.

**Comparative advantage case:** The affirmative does not need to show that there are problems which are so grave in the status quo that action must be taken, rather the affirmative begins by proposing a particular policy change (a plan) and argue that it should be adopted because it offers a comparative advantage over the status quo or over any modifications of the status quo or counter plan proposed by the negative. The details of the plan are central in this approach. In this approach a detailed plan is given near the beginning of the first affirmative speech and the rest of the debate concerns arguments that the plan proposed by the affirmative actually offers a significant advantage over the status quo (with possible minor modifications) or over an alternative plan proposed by the negative side which would itself be claimed to have comparative advantages.

**Goals case:** In a goals case the affirmative argues that any consideration of the arguments and issues in the debate should be made in the context of certain worthwhile and likely attainable goals. The goals are presented and argued to be significant and worthy. A plan is then presented which should be consistent with the goals and should aid in the attainment of those goals. Here the case for change is based on working toward worthwhile and attainable goals rather than on solving compelling needs or harms. To be defeat the case a negative either must show that the goals are not worthy or are unattainable, or that they are subordinate to and in conflict with other goals which are articulated by the negative, or finally that the proposed plan is not consistent with the goals.

**Plan Advantages:** In the comparative advantage case the key argument for the plan is that it offers advantages. However, in the needs and goals cases, “advantage” arguments are additional, supplementary arguments that an affirmative team can claim follow from the adoption of their particular plan and so offer bonus rationales beyond the primary purpose of the plan which is to meet the established need or work for the attainment of worthwhile goals.

**Generic Negative Responsibilities:**

The negative must show that the affirmative case is flawed or undesirable. Typically, a negative team may show this in any of four ways:

- 1) Attacks on the rationale for change:
  - 1a) There is no necessity for a change (the harms aren’t that great nor the alleged needs that compelling), but even if they were, the change proposed by the affirmative would not be practical, even if it were, it would not meet the alleged need, or secure the advantages or help to attain the goals; or even if it did, its adoption would necessarily entail significant disadvantages.

1b) The goals (against an affirmative goals case) are not worthy or significant, or there are other goals which both supercede and are in some conflict with those proposed by the affirmative. To defeat a goals case the negative should show either that the goals are not worthy (not worth achieving or striving for), are hopelessly unattainable, or are not as significant as and yet are in conflict with other (more worthwhile) goals which the negative should then articulate.

2) The status quo with possible minor modifications is better (or at least no worse) than the change proposed by the affirmative.

3) A change different from any stated or implied in the resolution would provide a better solution, secure greater advantages or more effectively attain the affirmative's stated goals, than the proposal advanced by the affirmatives. This approach involves a counter plan that should be introduced from the beginning of the negative case, if used. The negative team then assumes the burden of proof (though we maintain our convention of ties going to the negative).

4) Plan attacks:

A) The affirmative plan does not meet the terms of the resolution (is off the topic).

B) The affirmative plan does not meet the need nor help to attain the goal(s) – the plan doesn't solve the problem or help attain the goal

C) The affirmative plan introduces significant disadvantages (which among other things could include a poor cost-benefit ratio).

D) The affirmative either offers no plan (a real problem for the aff.) or offers one that is so vague that it is impossible to determine its potential effectiveness or problems.

#### **Debate Protocol for cross-ex and rebuttal periods:**

**Cross-ex:** During cross-examination debaters will try to expose weakness of their opponents arguments, or gaps in their opponent's command of relevant facts or will try to "set up" a powerful argument to be exploited in an upcoming speech. The cross-examination can be a lively exchange but should always be a courteous one. While the person conducting the cross-examination has the right to ask for brevity they do not have the absolute right to demand a simple "yes or no" answer to a complex question. It shows very poor use of the cross-examination period on the part of the questioner if the opponent manages to switch roles during the cross-examination and begin to ask and get responses instead of just answering. One has the right to establish one's role as the sole questioner during the period. When 3 minutes is up, no more questions can be asked, the responder, however, can briefly finish his/her answer.

**Rebuttal:** The rebuttal period is for analyzing and summarizing the analysis and arguments that took place during the constructive period (including cross-ex) of the debate. There should be no new lines of argument developed during the rebuttal period. While occasional pieces of evidence may be read for the first time in rebuttal it must be evidence for arguments which had already been developed and supported during the constructive periods (or evidence specifically requested by the opponents). A good rebuttal will give some context to the major arguments and analyze the key points of clash between the two teams - it is not terribly effective to merely repeat the original outline of the constructive argument with no recognition as to which arguments became "key players" in the specific debate at hand. The final analysis should explain why one side had the more compelling arguments.

## **BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGES (including a description of each of the 6 categories):**

**When filling in the ballot please be sure to indicate the round (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and the division (Adv. or Nov.). Use the team code (e.g. 5A) for the team and be sure to fill in the names of the debaters so that we are scoring accurately in the tabulation room.**

Judges will give a qualitative assessment for each speaker in each of the six categories: Organization, Analysis, Logic, Evidence, Refutation and Delivery. The qualitative assessments (Weak, Needs Improvement, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent) are designed to help the debater identify his or her strengths or weaknesses in the round. An overall score from 70 to 100 is assigned to each debater that should loosely correspond to the qualitative assessments given in the round. The team with the higher combined overall score in the round must win the debate (a tie point total would go to the negative). Most judges in our league first determine in their mind which team won the debate and then make sure that the point totals correspond to their overall impression of the debate. The winning team will have the higher point total, except in the case of a point total tie where the win goes to the negative (reflecting the piece of debate theory which states that the affirmative has the "burden of proof").

While it is important to give honest feedback we don't want to be too discouraging to those who are just starting out. An average score would range somewhere from 80 to 84. Scores in the low 70's should be rare for exceptionally weak performances. Scores in the mid to high 90's would similarly be very rare for exceptionally strong performances. . Please note that the performance expectations in the novice division will be lower, but the scoring should be adjusted to reflect that so that an average novice debater is also scoring between 80 and 84 points (though the performance may not be as polished as the advanced debater in that range).

The following descriptors may be helpful in scoring the individual debaters.

70-74: A weak performance. Probably significantly under time, with little development of the case, poor evidence and little effort to have direct clash;

75-79: A flawed performance with poor organization and lots of repetitions. The links between evidence and arguments are not well established and the delivery may not be particularly smooth.

80-84: An average performance. The debater shows reasonably good analysis of the topic and makes an effort to support his or her claims with appropriate evidence. The organization may break down a bit and while there is some effective clash, the debater may not have properly identified the crux of the debate and to give emphasis to the issues that deserved greatest emphasis in the round. The speaking style is reasonably smooth even if not exceptionally moving or persuasive.

85-89 An accomplished debater. The debater exhibited fine form in virtually all facets of debate, including sign-posting the arguments, responding appropriately to the key arguments of his or her opponent, effectively integrating evidence into the argument and identifying and giving special emphasis to the key points of clash in the round. The delivery is smooth and easy to follow.

90-94 An outstanding performance on every level. Likely to be in the running for an award. The debater shows excellent command of subtleties involved in the resolution (outstanding analysis), very effective organization, keeps track of all the key arguments and brings helpful clarity to the crux of the debate in the particular round. The speaking style is not only smooth, but persuasive with some rhetorical flourish.

Above 94: An exceptionally rare performance that manifests the highest levels of debate skill in all key categories and delivered with great clarity and persuasiveness.

We also ask that the judge rank each speaker in the round from 1<sup>st</sup> (for the top speaker in the room) through 4<sup>th</sup>. We use the ranks to break possible ties in speaker points when assigning the trophies at the end of the day.

Judges must write a "reason for decision" for each debate they judge and may opt to give some more specific written feedback to one or both teams.