

The Loomis Chaffee Debate Society

Invitation for the Loomis Chaffee Invitational Debate tournament to be held on January 12, 2025

12/10/2024

Fellow Debaters,

We are pleased to invite you to the 43rd annual Loomis Chaffee School Debate Tournament to be held Sunday, January 12, 2025. A schedule of events, including the time and place for registration, 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 four four-person teams with no more than two in each division (advanced and novice). We can accommodate up to 40 four-person teams. We have frequently been at or near capacity. This tournament serves as the final qualifying tournament for DANEIS competitors for the world championships.

All competitors will, over the course of the day debate both sides of a resolution which will be released the morning of the debate shortly after the close of registration (see schedule). The debate format is a cross-ex Oregon style 2v2 debate (see debate format below). We will supply each debater and judge with a packet of information and articles (approximately 10 pages) relevant to the resolution.

Debaters will have one hour to work together in teams/schools with the packet before the rounds of debate begin to prepare cases. However, once the resolution is announced debaters cannot access any other research materials other than the prepared packet – any use of the internet to conduct research can result in disqualification. Thus, 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 and defend cogent, persuasive arguments on both sides of the issue. After the one-hour preparation period, the debate competition will begin with each team debating both sides of the resolution. The first two rounds will be assigned (one round on each side) – on 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. If the resolution calls for a policy change, 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 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 which debates the first round on affirmative and the second on negative, and another 2-person team 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. The fees for entering the tournament will be \$90 for each four-person team entered (max of 2 in each division) - there is no additional fee for observers. **Every school should bring a judge for each 4-person team they enter. We have no objections to experienced, advanced student debaters serving as judges in the novice division, but adults should judge in the advanced division. We are not able to supply extra judges.**

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 one. 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 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 in December how many four-person teams in each division you'll likely be entering so that we can have reasonably accurate numbers in planning for the dining services and room allocations. We ask that the names of the debaters and judges be sent to us by January 8.

Sincerely,

Curt Robison (Adviser to the Loomis Chaffee Debate Society)
The Loomis Chaffee School
Windsor, CT 06095

e-mail 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

Please make sure your judges are familiar with the judging guidelines included at the end of this document.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

10:00 – 10:30 Registration in Clark Math/Science Lobby (Food available in dining hall)
10:55 Distribution of the packets to debaters in Gilchrist Auditorium (near registration in Clark Math/Science Lobby) along with a reminder of guidelines and rules for team preparation)
11:00 – 12:00 Debaters use the packet to prepare their cases working in classrooms of Clark (each school will be assigned one classroom where the group prepares with the packet)
11:15 Judges' meeting in Gilchrist Auditorium (near registration in the Clark Math/Science Building)
12:00 Schedules of the rounds of debate distributed to debaters in the Rooms of Clark
12:15 First Round of Debate (A teams on Aff, B teams on Neg)
1:30 Second Round (B teams on Aff, A teams on Neg)
2:45 Third Round (coin flip decides sides)

4:00-4:45 Supper available in the Loomis Dining Hall
4:55 –5:05 Awards Ceremony and Distribution of Results in Gilchrist Auditorium

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 or phone the information requested below back to us in December to indicate whether or not you are coming.

_____ We won't be coming to the Jan. 12 tournament.

_____ We will be participating in the Jan. 12 tournament.

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

We will bring (0, 1, 2) 4-person novice team(s).

We will bring (0, 1, 2) 4-person advanced team(s).

We ask that payment in full (\$90 per 4-person team) for each school should be made by the end of registration on the day of the tournament.

your school's name

name of contact person

phone of contact person

Send to:

Curt Robison

The Loomis Chaffee School

Windsor, CT 06095

e-mail: curt_robison@loomis.org

office phone: 860 687-6122

Continue for Judging Overview

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.

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.

The four constructive speeches have a 30-sec. grace period.

No more questions can be asked in Croxdx-ex after the 3 minutes have expired, the person being cross-examined, however, may briefly conclude the answer to the cross-ex question made as time expired.

There is no grace period in the rebuttal speeches.

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 in speaker points (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 described below:

- 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 complete 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 72 to 95 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 82 to 85. Scores in the low 70's should be rare for exceptionally weak performances. Scores in the mid 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 82 and 85 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.

72-74: 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.

80-85: 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 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.

90-93 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.

94-95: 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 1st (for the top speaker in the room) through 4th. We use the ranks to break possible ties in speaker points when assigning the trophies at the end of the day.

Judges should write some helpful comments for each of the debaters and finally should give a very brief "Reason for Decision" in the appropriate spot toward the bottom of the ballot.

Descriptions of the Judging Categories (weak through excellent in each)

Analysis: Does the debater define terms and interpret the resolution in a sound and reasonable way? Has the debater perceived the crucial issues that have emerged in the debate? Does the debater follow through with those key issues?

Does the debater's analysis successfully distinguish an argument from the evidence used to support the argument?

Organization: Is the structure of their argument made clear? Is there a clear outline of constructive arguments (and if a team uses a numbering system for their arguments do they stick with it)? Do members of the same team cooperate to present a unified case? Is the rebuttal well organized and easy to follow? Does the debater give an effective and clear introduction and conclusion to his or her speech?

Refutation: Is the refutation clear-cut in its attack on significant points of disagreement between the two teams? Did the team manage to address all the major constructive points of their opponents or did they let certain arguments slip past them? Do the arguments involve some of the traditional informal fallacies of relevance, evidence or ambiguity (examples: ad hominem or genetic fallacies, post hoc or cause and effect fallacies, equivocation or syntactical ambiguity)? Does the refutation "nit-pick" on rather minor points? Does either side raise a new line of argument in their rebuttal speeches?

Evidence: Does the debater show convincing knowledge of the issues involved in the resolution? Are contentions supported with sufficient, well-documented evidence? Does the debater make effective use of whatever evidence he/she uses by tying it strictly to the case structure? Does the debater avoid unsupported assertions? Is there an overuse of evidence that merely reports the opinions (often conflicting) of "experts"?

Logic: Is the debater's reasoning correct? Is the debater's reasoning quick and agile (particularly apparent in cross-ex situations)? Are common logical fallacies avoided on the debater's part and detected in their opponent's arguments? Does the evidence given actually support the argument it purports to support? Is there evidence of original thinking?

Delivery: Does the debater give the impression of genuineness and sincerity? Does the debater establish and maintain eye contact with the judge? Does the debater use good diction? Does the debater introduce humor and variety effectively? Does he/she establish different, yet appropriate, tones and paces for different parts and purposes in the speech? Is the debater pleasant and easy to listen to? Does the debater convey a sense of importance and excitement to the topic? Is the debater at home in his/her manner while speaking? Is the debater overly tied to a written text?

-Curtis Robison, debate coach
The Loomis Chaffee School

Judges in the Clark math and science building should bring their completed ballots after each round to the tabulation room in Clark (room 211). Judges in other buildings should seek out the "runner" to give their completed ballots.

New ballots are handed out only after receiving the ballot from the previous round.