



Ace Peak Online Tournament Rules

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How to Read the Rules

Formatting

Normal text is binding.

Bolded text is not binding. *It is presented for ease of reading and navigation.*

Italicized text is not binding. *It is provided for guidance, clarity, or explanation.*

Not Enforced

There is no official penalty for violating bold or italicized text. *Judges may use these passages at their discretion.*

Purpose

Priorities

Ace Peak online tournaments serve the following three purposes, in descending order of priority:

- 1. Prepare students for excellence in life after graduation.*
- 2. Prepare students for in-person tournaments in any high school league.*
- 3. Create a competitive tournament environment.*

Not League-specific

Ace Peak is not affiliated with any formal in-person competitive league. Participants are encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities to compete, regardless of league. Ace Peak's rules differ from those of other leagues. Participants are encouraged to read the rules carefully.

Eligibility

Requirements

A student is eligible to compete if they meet EITHER of the following criteria:

- 1) They are 12-18 years old and either have not graduated high school, or graduated less than 365 days ago.
- 2) They are eligible to compete in a major high school forensics league such as NSDA, NCFCA, Stoa, or NCFL.

All members of a team must meet these eligibility requirements.

Speakers do not need to be affiliated with a particular league or religion to participate.

Round 1 Check

These eligibility requirements must be met at the start time of round 1; they are ignored at all other times.

Judges

Judge Authority

Ace Peak believes in maximizing the authority of the judge, for both philosophical and logistical reasons. Many things that are hard-and-fast rules in other settings are non-binding here. Judges may disregard italicized print in this document at their discretion.

Complete Agency

The judge may vote any way they choose for any reason they choose. Judges are encouraged to base their decisions on the content of the round as much as possible, and to set aside personal biases and special knowledge.

Appealing a judge's decision is strongly discouraged.

Judge Eligibility

Someone is eligible to judge if they meet BOTH of the following criteria:

- 1) 18+ years old when round 1 begins.
- 2) Fluent in English.

No Orientation

No previous experience or training is needed. Debaters are responsible for teaching the judges representing them enough to do their jobs. Judges are encouraged to review the Ace Peak Judge Manual.

Prelim Responsibilities

At registration, speakers must register a judge who will be assigned to judge up to four rounds.

Judges must create a group call in Skype with all participants when the round time begins.

Alternate Judges

Speakers may replace the judges intended to represent them, provided the replacement is eligible. The alternate judge goes to the round to which the original judge was assigned.

Failure to Appear

If no judge has appeared after 20 minutes, or if the round cannot conclude because of scheduling/technical difficulties on the judge's part, the speaker the judge represents will be penalized with a forfeit in that round. The speakers with the missing judge will each receive a Bye.

Example: Jane's mother Mary is assigned to judge round 2 but doesn't show up. Jane wins round 2, but because of her forfeit, the round is recorded as a double loss. The

speakers with the missing judge each get a Win, and their speaker points/rank are the average of their results from other rounds. Jane receives 12 speaker points.

Failure to Submit

Judges must submit a decision, speaker points, and speaker rank for their rounds no later than 1 hour after the cutoff time ends. If the ballot arrives later than that, the round will be treated as if the judge failed to appear.

At the discretion of tournament officials, judges may continue to add feedback to a ballot after submitting their decision.

Avoid Conflicts

Judges are expected to avoid judging rounds if their personal biases for the speakers would make impartial ruling difficult. To prevent this, speakers are encouraged to recruit judges who are not already familiar with the competitors.

If a judge has no other option, taking a ballot for someone they know or already judged is acceptable.

Schedule

Week in Advance

The schedule of the tournament will be finalized and announced at registration.

Postings

Round announcements matching opponents and judges - or "Postings" - will be made at least 20 minutes before the round begins.

Failure to Appear

If a speaker has not appeared after 20 minutes, or if the round cannot conclude because of scheduling/technical difficulties on a speaker's part, the speaker will be penalized with a forfeit. Their opponent(s) will receive a Bye.

Going Maverick

If one member of a team is not available for any reason, their partner may speak on their behalf for one or all speeches/cross-examination. The missing partner will receive 12 speaker points and 4th rank.

Removal after 2 Absences

If a speaker/team fails to appear twice in a row, they will be removed from the tournament.

No Exceptions

No exceptions will be made for emergencies or other special circumstances. *This is for logistical reasons and to protect the competitive integrity of the tournament.*

Timekeeping

Judge is Timer

Judges are responsible for timing speeches, cross-examination, prep time, and cutoff time to ensure that the rules are upheld.

No Time Signals

Judges are not expected to provide time signals. Instead, speakers are encouraged to time themselves.

Special Win/Loss Conditions

Bye

If a debater receives a bye, they win that round. Their speaker points are an average of their other preliminary rounds.

Forfeit

If a debater receives a forfeit, they lose that round and receive 12 speaker points.

Double Loss

Judges have the right to give a double loss as an extreme punitive action. Double losses should never be given in response to a tie; they should only be used if both sides behaved so offensively that neither deserves to win.

Resolution

Resolutionism

A vote for the affirmative means that the resolution has been proven true; a vote for the negative means that it has been proven or presumed false.

Announced at registration

The resolution will be announced when registration opens. Formats with less preparation time, such as parliamentary, are excluded from this rule.

Ace Peak will vary resolutions throughout the year to uphold goal 1.

Ace Peak will often use the resolutions of other leagues to uphold goal 2, especially late in the season.

Speech Time

Start/Stop

Speech time begins when a speaker begins speaking and ends when time is used up or the speaker finishes. Once a speech has begun, it can only be stopped for a technical pause (see Technical Difficulties).

Overtime

Going slightly overtime to finish a sentence is acceptable. Speakers may not begin a new sentence after their speech time has ended. Judges are encouraged to penalize speakers who go more than a few seconds overtime, and to heavily penalize speakers who introduce new arguments in overtime.

No Rollover

Unused speech time is forfeited.

Preparation Time

Meaning

Each speaker/team has a budget of time that they may use before a speech. Preparation time may be used to write notes, consult with a partner, or quietly reflect. It may not be used to consult with non-participants or to conduct additional research.

Preparation time is pooled between both speakers on a team.

Begins Immediately

If a speaker is due to speak, they must either begin within 10 seconds or use preparation time. *Speakers should alert the judge if they are using preparation time.*

Rollover

Unused preparation time can be used later in the round. It cannot be used as speech time.

Example: In a Lincoln-Douglas round, the negative speaker uses 1 minute to prepare for the NC. They have 2 minutes left to prepare for the NR.

Speech Begins When Prep Ends

If a speaker has used all their preparation time, their speech time must begin whether or not they have begun speaking.

New Arguments

Speakers are expected to present all new lines of argumentation in constructive speeches. New arguments in rebuttal speeches are acceptable only if they could not have been presented in an earlier speech.

Cross-Examination

After Constructives

Cross-Examination always lasts 3 minutes and goes after every constructive speech.

Witness and Examiner

In cross-examination, the person who just spoke - or “witness” - answers questions, while a representative of the other team - or “examiner” - asks questions.

No Prep Time

Cross-examination must begin within 10 seconds of the end of the preceding speech.

Speech Timing Rules

Cross-Examination uses the same timing rules, such as measuring overtime, that are used for speeches.

Examiner doesn't go Next

In Team debate, the speaker who is not scheduled to give the next speech is the examiner.

Example: After the 1AC, the 1N is set to speak next. Thus, the 2N cross-examines the 1AC.

Evidence

Immediate Credit

Speakers must credit the original source whenever they quote someone else's words. Credit must be given before the speech is over.

Practices such as “Sources are available upon request,” are not permitted.

Verbal Clarity

Speakers must make clear when they are using their own words, and when they are quoting someone else. They must also indicate when they skip over more than 2 full sentences in the original text.

Example: “Later in the article, they say ...”

Two Standards of Completeness

Speakers are expected to provide enough information about a source to meet both standards of completeness:

- 1) Everything the judge needs to know to accurately evaluate the evidence.*
- 2) Full credit to the original author(s).*

The name and credentials of the author and the year of publication are usually an acceptable minimum.

Modification

Evidence may be modified by adding or removing words. Modification may not add to or alter the meaning of the text. It may not omit context that is essential for understanding the text. It must be clearly marked so it can be reviewed by others.

Available for Review

Upon request by the opponent during the round or the judge at any time before the ballot is submitted, a speaker must produce any evidence they quoted for review. If the evidence has been modified, the original text must also be available.

Modifying the evidence in a way that makes the original visible - such as shrinking the font size of omitted text - is encouraged.

Evidence may be shared by pasting text into the chat, sharing a picture of the evidence, or emailing the judge and opponents.

No Research in Round

Speakers may not use the internet or any other resource to gain new information or evidence during the round. *Research between rounds is allowed.*

Penalize Infractions

Judges are encouraged to penalize unethical use of evidence with loss of speaker points and/or the round. Penalizable infractions include not crediting a source in the speech it was presented, not presenting evidence for immediate review upon request, modifying evidence in a way that changes its meaning, and intentionally fabricating or misrepresenting facts.

Trust in the Judge

Ace Peak depends on judges to protect the integrity of rounds by holding speakers to high standards of conduct. Judges are encouraged to seek input from tournament officials for help making a decision or understanding the rules.

Technical Difficulties

Speakers are Responsible

Technical difficulties are inevitable in an online tournament. These rules attempt to strike a balance between leniency and competitive integrity. Speakers must take responsibility for making sure that they and the judges representing them have stable internet connections, working microphones, and no distractions or scheduling conflicts. If technical difficulties become too severe, the speaker will be penalized and the tournament will proceed. Speakers should adopt a mindset of complete personal responsibility for their equipment, rather than shifting blame or asking for special treatment when things go wrong.

All participants are encouraged to test their setup before the tournament begins.

Cutoff Time

Cutoff time is a maximum duration that a round will be permitted to continue. It begins when the first speech begins.

Failure to Complete

If a round reaches the cutoff time, the round will end. The judge will give a forfeit to the speaker/team most responsible for the delay. Their opponents will receive a Bye.

Technical Pause

Any participant may ask for a technical pause by placing a “!” in the chat box. A technical pause may be used only for resolving technical issues. Technical pauses are granted at the judge’s sole discretion. Judges may use as many technical pauses as they wish, for whatever duration they wish.

Technical Repeat

At the judge’s request, time may be added to the current clock and the speaker or speakers may repeat a portion of a speech that was not communicated effectively due to technical difficulties. Speakers must recreate the original performance as accurately as possible. Cross-examination questions and answers cannot be changed. Judges may use as many technical repeats as they wish.

Speakers may not request technical repeats.

Technical repeats can only be used on the current speech or cross-examination.

Delays Don’t Move Cutoff

Technical difficulties and delays do not extend the cutoff time. *Thus, judges should employ them sparingly.*

Miscellaneous

Decorum

Speakers should treat everyone with the kindness, respect, and dignity appropriate to a formal competitive high school speaking event. Vulgar or obscene behavior is not permitted.

Audio Only

Ace Peak debates use audio only. Use of a webcam is not permitted. *This is to mitigate technical difficulties and ensure an equitable playing field.*

At some tournaments, Ace Peak may allow competitors to record or stream their elimination rounds. If such permission has been given, use of a webcam will be permitted.

No Aids

Speakers may not supplement their speeches with written, audio, or visual aids.

Muted Mic

Everyone is expected to mute their microphone when it is not in use.

Spectators

At the discretion of the judge and speakers, spectators may be added to the call. Their microphones must always be muted and they may not speak or interact with the

participants. Spectators must be removed from the call if the judge or any of the speakers wishes. Spectators will not be allowed to cause any delays or disruptions.

Example: “Can we wait a few minutes before the next speech? My mom has to restart her phone.” No. Waiting for participants is acceptable. Waiting for spectators is not.

Punitive Action

Judges should make clear on a ballot when they take punitive action, both for the benefit of the speaker and so tournament officials have the option to explore the matter further.

Tournament officials depend on the judge for enforcement of rules and ethics. They will only intervene under special circumstances.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

The Lincoln-Douglas format uses value resolutions. A value resolution assigns worth to one or more entities.

In Lincoln-Douglas, speakers compete one-on-one, as follows:

Affirmative Constructive	6 minutes
Negative Constructive	7 minutes
1 st Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	6 minutes
2 nd Affirmative Rebuttal	3 minutes
Preparation time	3 minutes
Cutoff time	1 hour

Team Debate

The Team format uses policy resolutions. A policy resolution proposes a change.

In Team, speakers compete in teams of two, as follows:

1 st Affirmative Constructive	8 minutes
1 st Negative Constructive	8 minutes
2 nd Affirmative Constructive	8 minutes
2 nd Negative Constructive	8 minutes
1 st Negative Rebuttal	5 minutes
1 st Affirmative Rebuttal	5 minutes
2 nd Negative Rebuttal	5 minutes
2 nd Affirmative Rebuttal	5 minutes
Preparation time	5 minutes

Cutoff time

2 hours

Speakers assume a role as either the first or second speaker in their team and give corresponding speeches.

Example: The 1st affirmative speaker give the 1AC and 1AR, and cross-examines the 2NC.