

Congressional Debate Final Round Description

Wadsworth High School Grizzly Classic Speech and Debate Tournament

January 6th, 2024

This year, at the Wadsworth High School Grizzly Classic Speech and Debate Tournament, the final round of Congressional Debate will feature a Scenario to be debated in place of various bills and resolutions. The two preliminary rounds will use the legislation from the OSDA High School Docket for January 2023.

What is a Congressional Debate Scenario?

The general concept of the scenario is that it places the legislative body in a practical application situation, where a situation has taken place somewhere either around the country or around the globe. Competitors, acting as The United States Senate must deal with the situation by drafting and passing a piece of legislation within the chamber to address the issue.

Briefs and the In-Round Update:

Competitors will be given three sets of information on the situation: a first brief, a second brief, and an in-round update.

The first brief of information will be released along with our tournament invitation in December and will also be available on Speechwire under “Files for Download”. This brief will take the form of an excerpt from a New York Times article that will set the stage for the situation that will later be revealed. Legislators should begin to research and understand the various topics presented in this article. The second brief of information will come in the form of another news article, and will be handed out to coaches at registration the morning of January 7th. The second brief will reveal the situation, allowing competitors to begin to brainstorm arguments to bring to debate in the final chamber. Physical copies of both the first and second brief will be available at the registration table during the tournament.

The in-round update will be released to all competitors about an hour into the debate, providing more information on the situation as it develops.

Legislative Goals for Competitors:

The ultimate goal of the students during the Final Round is to draft and pass at least one piece of legislation to address the situation that has emerged. The chamber will not end until one piece of legislation has been passed (with the exception being a hard cut off at 3 hours). However, the goal is to keep debating for at least 2 and a half hours, so if one piece of legislation is passed before that mark, legislators will be allowed to continue debate on more legislation as the chamber sees fit.

As such, there is no guarantee of an affirmative/negative flow of debate, as the scenario will present multiple ideas, options, and possible solutions to the situation to consider and debate.

Preparation and Evaluation:

Legislators must be able to take good notes, think on their feet, make rational arguments, incorporate clash effectively, and think outside the box in order to succeed in the Congressional Debate Final.

Use of prewritten “canned” speeches is not realistic and should be advised against, since legislators will not know the specific parameters of the scenario until the morning of the tournament.

The winners of the debate will be those that can: a) draft and advance legislation that addresses the situation effectively, b) deliver extemporaneous speeches in support or against proposed legislation, c) display significant background knowledge on the topic area(s) being debated and d) role play as United States Senators effectively.