

KPDP CR: The Rules of the Debate

valid in 2000/2001 academic year

The competitions of the KPDP-DL organized by the Debate Clubs' Association are ruled by the cornerstone documents of the Program. These are:

The ADK Statutes	Adjudicator's Handbook
KPDP Code of Ethics	The Rules of Competition
The Aims of the KPDP in the CR	Appendices to the Rules of Competition
The Rules of the Debate	

These documents are valid for the whole debate competition season and can only be changed after the debate year is over or before one starts.

Depending on the nature of the document it is the ADK directorate, ADK NTT or the ADK general assembly that can change the cornerstone document of the programme.

The following rules are valid for the KPDP-DL competitions in the 2000/2001 academic year .

Table of contents:

[1\) Introductory Provisions \(Objectives\)](#)

[2\) Format of a Debate](#)

[3\) Rules of a Debate](#)

[4\) Evaluation](#)

1. Introductory Provisions (Objectives)

The aim of the Debating League is to facilitate in an attractive way the development of the skills, abilities and knowledge of the participants.

Competitive debate is intended to educate while teaching sportsmanship and social etiquette as well. Favoring one or more of these aspects at the expense of others is to misunderstand the fundamental principles of competitive debate.

Nevertheless, considering the age of the participants the formative aspect shall be considered essential since their approach to life is being formed. In view of that, participants agree:

- to adhere to the principles of fair play, decent behaviour and mutual respect to the best of their abilities
- not to knowingly use untrue information;
- to be willing to debate given resolution,

The adjudicators and coaches of individual teams agree to conduct themselves in the same spirit and, in harmony with that, to prepare and evaluate the debaters.

2. Karl Popper Debate Format

Two teams participate in each debate. One team is given the role of the affirmative side, the other one the negative. The selection of the role (side) shall be conducted in a way announced beforehand to the coaches of both teams by the organizer of that debate. Each team consists of three to five debaters, three of whom actively participate in the debate. Names and the order of the three active debaters shall be announced by the team at the beginning of the debate. Debaters of a team can freely change within their team during a competition, albeit not during a debate.

2.1 Roles of Individual Speakers

The debate is started by the first member of the affirmative side (A1). He/she has the right to define the resolution. S/he introduces the criterion (if the resolution allows one), and then outlines the structure and organization of the defense of the resolution. S/he presents the focus of argumentation and the basic arguments of his /her side.

After A1 finishes his/her speech, s/he is cross-questioned by the third speaker of the negative side (N3). Cross-questioning lasts 3 minutes. The main speech lasts 6 minutes.

N1

The first speaker of the negative side (N1) must accept the given definition, unless it contradicts the rules of the competition. Her/his primary task is to deal with the arguments of the affirmative side (i.e. to refute or accept them). After s/he thinks s/he has managed his/her task, s/he shall present his/her team's case and major arguments. S/he can also introduce their own criterion.

After finishing his/her speech, N1 is cross-questioned by the third speaker of the affirmative side (A3). Cross-questioning lasts three minutes. The main speech lasts 6 minutes.

A2

The second speaker of the affirmative side (A2) primarily supports the arguments of A1 which have been challenged/refuted by N1. S/he refutes the refutation (i.e. rebuts). If the negative side presented their own case, s/he shall refute it. After s/he thinks s/he has managed his/her task, s/he shall continue in the argumentation of the affirmative side.

After finishing his/her speech, A2 is cross-questioned by the first speaker of the negative side. Cross-questioning lasts three minutes. The main speech lasts 6 minutes.

N2

The second speaker of the negative side (N2) shall first challenge what A2 tried to rebut (primarily challenges the challenge of the refutation), and then s/he challenges new arguments presented by A2. After s/he thinks s/he has managed her/his task, s/he continues in the argumentation of her/his side (provided that the negative side, beginning with N1, had decided to build own constructive case).

After finishing his/her speech, N2 is cross-questioned by the first speaker of the aff. side. Cross-questioning lasts three minutes. The main speech lasts 6 minutes.

A3

A3 challenges the statements of N2, sums up the arguments of both sides, on the basis of which s/he shall prove why in her/his opinion the affirmative side has defended its standpoint in the debate. S/he does not bring in new arguments, but can support the presented ones with new concrete pieces of evidence.

The speech lasts 5 minutes.

N3

N3 challenges the negation of A3, sums up arguments of both sides, on the basis of which s/he shall prove why s/he thinks that the negative side has refuted the standpoint of the affirmative side. S/he does not bring in new arguments, but can support the presented ones with new concrete pieces of evidence.

The speech lasts 5 minutes.

A1	6 min	Preparatory time: Aff. team 5 mins. Neg. team 7 mins.
N1 - A1	3 min	
N1	6 min	
A3 - N1	3 min	
A2	6 min	
N1 - A2	3 min	
N2	6 min	
A1 - N2	3 min	
A3	5 min	
N3	5 min	

2.2 Three-a-side Debating

Team debating is characterized by a division of roles among all three members of the team. There is a clear progression from the opening speaker, who presents entirely new material, to the closing speakers (A3 and N3) who deal *exclusively* with what has been said by the previous speakers. In the closing speech they present a conclusion which brings together the analysis of the previous speakers of their team. The team works in a unified way; it is not a group of individuals. The judge will evaluate how well the team members fulfill their roles.

2.3 Preparation time, communication during a debate

During the course of the debate, the affirmative team has the right to take 5 minutes and the negative team 7 minutes for preparation between individual presentations. Their request to take time for preparation and its amount shall be announced in a suitable way to the moderator/timekeeper of the debate.

Except for the preparation time (taken by either team), the members of the team are not allowed to speak to each other during the course of the debate.

Coach - team communication of any form is not permitted during the course of the debate (from its beginning till the end of N3's speech).

3. Rules of a Debate

3.1 Criterion

Concerning policy resolutions a criterion is a popularly accepted desirable aim which sets the line of the case. A criterion serves this function (setting the line of the case) also with the non-policy resolutions (factual and value resolutions) where it could be understood as either a standard or a goal. See "Debate: A Guide for Teachers and Students" pp. 56-57.

3.2 Definition

The purpose of the definition is to explain how the affirmative side understands the resolution and what they want to discuss.

The affirmative side has the right to define the resolution in any way provided that:

- the definition does not depart from the common meaning of the resolution;
- the meaning of the words is not twisted purposefully;
- the definition is "reasonable".

The negative side is allowed to challenge the definition only if the definition in question does not conform to the above-mentioned rules. If the negative side challenges the definition, this must be done by N1, who will explain why the definition does not conform to the rules and will offer a revised definition.

Negative strategy is considered fallacious if the team challenges the definition without explaining the necessity of doing so during the course of the debate (purposeless challenge for challenge only). The clash in a competitive debate should be over arguments, not over the definition.

A2 may challenge the revised definition only when it does not conform to the above mentioned rules.

The right of definition is a right (not necessarily a duty) of the affirmative side. If the affirmative side does not provide the definition, this right is passed to the first speaker of the negative side. If s/he wants to use this right, s/he can do so provided s/he conforms to the above-mentioned rules.

3.3 The Task of the Affirmative Side

Where the resolution is expressed as a factual one, the affirmative side must prove that resolution holds true *in a decisive/persuasive number of cases*, which has been specified by the definition (criterion) and accepted by the negative side.

3.4 Who Wins the Debate

The debate is won by the affirmative team if, on the basis of its argumentation, it upheld the resolution debated. The debate is won by the negative team if, on the basis of its argumentation, it disproved the affirmative case or put it into serious doubt. When the debate is evaluated the "strength" of the arguments is taken into consideration (see 4.1. and 4.3.1.).

The negative team does not necessarily have to disagree with all of the steps in the affirmative party's process of supporting the resolution. As long as it proves the invalidity of the conclusions derived from this process, it still can win the debate.

Apart of this fundamental rule there exist other co-rules for the evaluation of the debate. See 4.

3.5 Negative Case

The negative side does not have to present its own case in the debate. It should concentrate on attacking the affirmative side's case. However, if the negative party does decide to present their own case, it is still their task to prove that the affirmative case is not valid and, at the same time, to prove that their own case is valid. It is then the duty of the affirmative side to not only prove their own case, but to also disprove the negative case.

Affirmative and negative cases must be mutually exclusive - they can not coexist side by side and be both valid at the same time.

3.6 Argumentation

Teams should concern themselves with using logical arguments supported by relevant evidence.

3.7 Refutation

The task of the negative side is to refute or put into a serious doubt the affirmative case as a whole.

If the affirmative side has used a number of pieces of evidence to support one argument, and the negative side is able to refute that main point with one counterargument, the negative team can this way refute the whole group of pieces of evidence together. However, to disprove a piece of evidence does not necessarily mean disproving the argument.

3.8 Argument supporting evidence

If the evidence is considered to be generally known, it is not necessary for individual speakers to explicitly prove its reliability. (Basic annotation is still a necessity though.) However, if the party is introducing surprising facts, statistics, etc., it must be ready to prove the authenticity of their evidence to the adjudicators.

3.9 Impromptu Debate

Based on the decision of the organizer, some debates may be impromptu, i.e. the debaters do not know the topic beforehand. The preparation time and procedure for the impromptu debate are determined by the organizer of the debate provided that:

- both teams receive the resolution at the same time;
- both teams are provided with similar preparation conditions.

Only members of the team (i.e. 3-5 registered debaters) may take part in the preparation, no one else. Names and the order of three active debaters of each team are announced after completing the preparation.

4. Evaluation

4.1 Content

Content means the arguments that are used, and it is separate from style. Thus, the “strength” of the arguments should be measured without reference to the quality of the oratory and presentation. Strength is understood as an arguments logical correctness, relevance to the resolution, and its social and ethical dimensions.

Relevant is considered only such an argument that contains *explicitly* expressed conclusion regarding validity/non-validity of

the argument and impact of such an conclusion to the validity of the line/resolution.

The content category will also include an assessment of the success/failure of the debaters to refute/rebut.

This evaluation must be done from the standpoint of the average reasonable person.

The adjudicator’s job is to assess the “strength” of the arguments used as well as the validity of refutation. If a team introduces a plainly weak argument, they will not gain a high number of points in the “content” category; on the other hand, such an argument will still count if the opposing side does not refute it. Two consequences follow from this:

If the argument is plainly weak, it would not be highly assessed in a content category. On the other hand, an opposing team which *does not refute it may well have made a bigger mistake!* Even in a case of plainly poor argument it is still a duty of an opposing team to explain why the argument is poor. To ignore *any* argument -

even a plainly poor one- is a major content error, which could finally mean that the argument is won by the party which had introduced it. See also 3.4.

4.2 Style

The “style” category refers to:

a) language use (rich vocabulary, ability to formulate ideas, composition of the speech and its style, use of figures of speech, etc.);

b) manner of speaking. This includes both diction (articulation, intonation, phrasing, pace, etc.) and the nonverbal communication (facial expression, gestures, postures, eye contact with the audience, etc.).

In debating in English, mistakes in accent, pronunciation, etc. should not be heavily penalized, although the usage of colloquial (or even worse) English should be discouraged by lower marks in style.

Debaters shall address each other politely and dress formally.

4.3 Strategy

The category of strategy basically involves two elements:

- 1) the structure and timing of the speech; and
- 2) the speaker’s understanding of the issues of the debate.

4.3.1 Structure and Timing

A good speech has a clear introduction, body and conclusion. Along the way there should be signposts to help us see where the speaker is going. The sequence of arguments should be logical and flow naturally from point to point, which applies to the speech of each individual debater and the three speeches of the team together.

Members of one team *must not contradict each other* and must support each other, i.e. *must develop their case*. If the team is not unified, the judge must consider it a major mistake.

Under the strategy category the judge shall appreciate clarity, division of the topic and organization of the speech. Unfocused speech (failing to indicate where it is going) should not be highly rewarded.

The organisation and cohesion of the case is considerably improved by a criterion. It is therefore recommended to establish a criterion providing the resolution allows one.

It is also considered to be poor strategy to put forward less than two and more than five arguments (their matter-of-factness and factual value are to be assessed under the content category), and not making use of the information gained during the cross-questioning.

Within timing we distinguish two aspects:

- a) speaking within the allowed time limit; and
- b) giving an appropriate amount of time to the individual issues in the speech.

4.3.1.a Speaking Within the Time Limit

A speaker who goes significantly over/undertime (+/- 30 sec) will receive lower marks within the strategy category.

4.3.1.b Time Division and Time Layout

As for the second aspect of strategy, a speaker shows that s/he has understood the resolution by giving priority to important issues and leaving the unimportant ones for later. It is generally a good idea for a rebuttal speaker (i.e. anyone other than A1) to begin with the attack on the other side's arguments before going on to his/her own positive case.

The judge, therefore, must evaluate not only the "strength" of the arguments under the content category, but also the use of time and the proper understanding of priority under the strategy category.

An important part of strategy is also utilizing information gained from cross-questioning during the course of a debate.

4.3.2 Understanding Issues of the Debate

Closely related to the last point is that debaters should understand what the focus of the debate is and be able to distinguish between the essential and non-essential issues. It is a waste of time for a rebuttal speaker to deal with trivial points if crucial arguments are left unanswered. Such a speaker does not understand what the debate is about (is not following the debate well), and should not score well in strategy. By contrast, a speaker who understands what the essential issues are and deals with them thoroughly should score well under strategy.

4.4 Watching Opponents' Debates

Members of any team can, as observers, watch any debate.

4.4. Cross-questioning

The purpose of cross-questioning is:

- a) to help reveal and point out the weaknesses in the argumentation of the previous speaker (opposing speaker),
- b) to clarify unclear points from the previous speaker's speech,
- c) to prepare room for argumentation of one's team.

The questioner asks and the addressed person responds. Questions and responses must be brief and clear.

The information obtained during cross-questioning is used by the questioner's team in their subsequent speeches. The questioner may ask about *anything* provided that s/he shows in the further course of the debate a connection between the questions and the resolution debated. The addressed person may refuse to answer personal questions.

Points for cross-questioning are actually represented in a distinct part of the evaluation; the speakers will get points as individuals for cross-questioning. Making use of the information obtained during cross-questioning is evaluated under the strategy category (see 4.3.1.b).