

ROSTRUM DEBATING RULES (in the order of speaking) from a booklet by Ron Johnson

AFFIRMATIVE - FIRST SPEAKER

1. Introduce the subject to the audience
2. Define any difficult words, phrases or concepts
3. If the topic is capable of being interpreted in different ways, explain how your team will interpret it and why you have chosen that angle
4. Outline broadly the team's argument
5. Explain what areas the next two affirmative speakers will be addressing
6. Develop your own pioneer points
7. Recap and summarise the argument to date.

NEGATIVE - FIRST SPEAKER

1. Commence with relevant introduction
2. Accept, modify or reject the affirmative team's definitions or interpretations
3. If the definitions or interpretations have been modified or rejected, offer the alternatives for your team and explain why that approach should be adopted
4. If all arguments rely on the modified interpretations, deal strongly with the issues they raise
5. If either interpretation could be accepted, strongly attack the arguments put by the first speaker for the affirmative
6. Don't develop minor points. Keep to the broader issues
7. Outline the team's case, develop your own points and explain what the second speaker will cover, remembering the 3rd speaker cannot introduce new material.
8. Summarise the case to date.

AFFIRMATIVE - SECOND SPEAKER

1. Commence with relevant introduction
2. Take up major points at issue and concentrate on them to the exclusion of side issues
3. Consolidate your team's interpretation of the subject
4. Reinforce any main points made by the first speaker if they have been disputed
5. If possible, strongly attack any points made by the first negative speaker
6. Develop any points allocated to you by the team leader
7. Give a brief summary of the case to date.

NEGATIVE - SECOND SPEAKER

1. Commence with relevant introduction
2. Take up the main points at issue
3. Re-establish or consolidate the negative interpretation if necessary
4. Reinforce the first speaker's main points (if they were disputed)
5. Attack the main points of the affirmative case in detail
6. Develop your own points as allocated by the team leader
7. Summarise both cases to date and show why your team's argument should be preferred.

AFFIRMATIVE - THIRD SPEAKER

1. Commence with relevant introduction
2. Reinforce main points made to date by your team
3. Strongly attack the opposition's case, either as a whole or directed at particular speakers
4. You may introduce new material and allocated a section by your team leader, develop it strongly
5. Summarise your own team's case and that of the opposing team, comparing and contrasting them.
6. Explain why the affirmative case is the superior one and urge the audience to concur.

NEGATIVE - THIRD SPEAKER

1. Commence with relevant introduction
2. Reinforce main points made to date by your team
3. Strongly attack the opposition's case, either as a whole or aimed at a particular speaker
4. No new material may be introduced – unless it be by way of a rebuttal
5. Summarise own team's case and that of the opposition, comparing and contrasting
6. Explain why the negative case is the superior one and urge the audience to concur.