

### THE USE OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS IN POLICY DEBATE

*“For a trial period of one year, (the 2006-2007 school year), using the University Interscholastic League guidelines, the use of laptop computers in Policy Debate shall be permitted at the NFL National Tournament. The use of laptop computers at 2006-2007 NFL District competitions will be the autonomous decision of each individual district committee.”*

#### Guidelines for Laptop Use

For a trial period of **one school year, (2006-2007)**, the use of laptop computers by competitors in NFL Policy Debate rounds at the National Tournament is permissible for flowing or evidence retrieval so long as wire or wireless connections are disabled and remain disabled while the debate is in progress. The use of laptop computers (using these same guidelines) at 2006-2007 NFL District competitions will be the autonomous decision of each individual district committee.

- A. Computers equipped with removable wireless cards must have the cards removed before the beginning of any round of competition. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disengage equipment.
- B. Computers with built-in wireless capability may be used only if the wireless capability is disabled. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disable the equipment.
- C. Wired connections (Ethernet or phone) during rounds of competition are not permitted.
- D. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside the competition room are prohibited. (This does not prohibit non-electronic communication between debate partners during prep time.)
- E. Sanction: Contestants found to have violated provisions A – C above shall forfeit the round of competition and receive zero points. Contestants found to have violated provision D above shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds. At NFL District Tournaments, the District Committee shall make the final decision concerning disqualification. In case of a serious dispute or critical question, the acting tournament referee (representing the National Office) can be contacted for a ruling.
- F. Availability of Evidence: Contestants electing to use computers shall have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically, but must be provided in a format readable by the opposing team and the judge.
- G. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts shall not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants.

Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking.

Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure. No special consideration or accommodations, including no additional prep time or speech time, will be given by judges or contest directors should equipment failure occur.

By choosing to use laptop computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

## NEW POLICY DEBATE EVIDENCE CLARIFICATION

### RULE

In all rounds of debate in NFL district and national competition, all debaters shall orally deliver complete citations for each piece of evidence introduced to include the name of the author, title of source (E. G. title of book not chapter; title of journal, not article), and complete date. Written citations must include name of author, qualifications, complete title of source (E. G. title book, not chapter; title of journal, not article), and complete date. Online sources must also include the title of the site, database, or access point, the date accessed, and the web address. The additional citation required for online sources must appear on all evidence, but is not read. Should two or more quotations be used from the same source, the complete citation need be given only for the first piece of evidence used from that source. Qualifications of authors should appear on the evidence but is not required to be read in the round.

### PENALTY

Evidence lacking specified citation and challenged by the opposition shall be disregarded by the judge unless said citation is proffered in the immediately subsequent speech. If a citation infraction occurs in the final speech, the opponent may protest to the judge. At the conclusion of a challenge related to the oral presentation of or in round availability of a citation, the judge is the sole determiner of the level of penalty in the round in relationship to the level of the violation, not to exceed a maximum penalty of a loss with zero points for the offending competitor, as part of the judge's decision making process. However, if an evidence violation is presented where a debater is found to have committed a "serious distortion" or to have used "non-existent evidence," at the conclusion of the due process, the offending debater may be disqualified from the tournament.

## THE USE OF ORAL CRITIQUES IN NFL DEBATE COMPETITION

No debate ballot should be turned in without a reason for decision. Oral commentary should not be considered a substitute for the written ballot. Blank ballots or ballots with the word "oral" written on them with no other commentary are not considered responsible examples of education or adjudication. Any judge who turns in a ballot at the National Tournament that is blank or a ballot without at least some commentary on it concerning the round debated or the judge's reason for decision will forfeit the judging bond paid by the school represented by that judge.

NFL strongly discourages judges from disclosing decisions in the preliminary rounds of NFL competition. Comments made by a judge (orally or in writing) should be constructive and professional. Ballots with decisions should be turned into a debate tournament official before a judge makes any oral comments to any competitors. If oral comments are made to competitors, they should never affect the overall time schedule of the tournament or delay subsequent rounds. Please end comments by judges in the round early enough so that competitors may get to subsequent rounds on time. Tournament officials may ask judges to limit their comments in order to facilitate the tournament schedule.