

# BEFORE WE GET STARTED

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TYLER ROSTERS

**Session 326**



TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE

# **An Introduction to Congress**

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# **Debate? Speech? Both?**

Although this is a debate event (which means it requires clash), you are not primarily judged by whether or not you convince others. You are evaluated on the quality of your speeches and your overall participation in the chamber.

# Three Distinct Mastery Areas

1. Research and Speech Preparation
  2. Delivery Style and Mechanics
  3. Congress Strategy and Parliamentary Procedure
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# Research and Speech Prep

- Legislation due on September 10 to your Region Clerk.
  - This is OPTIONAL.
- By October 1, UIL will post full dockets for your Region.
- For about one month, assign the docket out to your team.
  - Can be to write speeches, collect research, develop pros/cons.
  - Remember to research BOTH sides.
  - No Internet in rounds at UIL so make sure you have it accessible to you.
- Prioritize “Congress-worthy” research. Hold yourself to a higher standard of research.
- Brainstorm possible unique branches of research from the topic.

# Research and Speech Prep

- 3 minute speeches + 2/1 minute of questioning.
- Ultimately, plan to have at least one speech prepared (100% for authorships/sponsorships and about 70% for all others) for each item on docket.
- The remaining 30% is for REFUTATION and specific commentary on the arguments discussed in the round.
- \*\*\*You must be adaptable...
  - Switch research (if someone else used it)
  - Switch sides (if that's appropriate)

# Research and Speech Prep

- Must prepare for questioning too.
- Direct Questioning
  - 30 second blocks of time
  - Talking back and forth with speaker
  - Should be “cross” and moving the debate forward
  - Avoid “friendly questions”
  - Be strategic - use questions to challenge speakers
- Pre-written questions may be okay - but be willing to adapt.

# Delivery Style and Mechanics

- Formality in discussion - “Representative \_\_\_\_\_”.
- Talking TO the chamber perhaps more than judges.
  - You’re asking the chamber to vote in favor/against the legislation, but...
  - Judges are evaluating.
- STRUCTURAL MECHANICS
  - Introduction: Attention Getting Statement + Thesis + Preview\*
  - Body: Two\* Body Points → Claim, Warrant, Impact, Refutation
  - Conclusion: Thesis + Connect Back to AGS.
- Notes are fine - citations, specific study statistics, etc
- DO NOT READ!



# Delivery Style and Mechanics

- Powerful movements. (Nonverbal transitions and refutation)
- Passionate speaking. (Don't take this too far.)
- Extemporaneous style.
  - Yes, that means you should be doing extemp too!
- Punctuated gestures.
- Notes, but no laptops. And probably no tablets.

# Delivery Style and Mechanics

- Direct Clash and Refutation
  - “Now, Representative Chalmers points to the Wilson study of how a living wage would impact the upper class taxpayers. However, Representative, you fail to remember our oath to protect the interests of all our citizens. You should prefer my analysis on this because...”
- Pointing out what you’ve provided that others haven’t.
  - “We’ve heard question and question about the economics on this issue, but no one has provided a clear answer, so I’ll do that now. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace found last September that...”
- Cleaning up the “flow” of the round.

# Congress Strategy

- Parliamentary Procedure
  - Not every motion here will be heard.
  - Pay attention to each column.
  - Respect the process.
  - Exists to protect interests of the minority, but...
  - Don't use it as a "gotcha".
- Presiding Officer
  - Student leader chosen by chamber.
  - Excellent record keeping and organization.
  - Efficiently and quickly moving.
  - Maximizes participation.

## Table of Parliamentary Motions

Following is the National Forensic League's motion chart, annotated (non-shaded) to show motions used most often.

Table of Most Frequently Used Parliamentary Motions Adapted for use in National Forensic League Congressional Debate							
Type	Motion	Purpose	Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required Vote	May Interrupt?
Privileged	24. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange time of next meeting	Yes	Yes-T	Yes-T	Majority	Yes
	23. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	Yes	No	Yes-T	Majority	No
	22. Recess	To dismiss the meeting for a specific length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	Majority	No
	21. Rise to a question of privilege	To make a personal request during debate	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	20. Call for orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed motion	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
Incidental	19. Appeal a decision of the chair	To reverse a decision	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes
	18. Rise to a point of order or parliamentary procedure	To correct a parliamentary error or ask a question	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	17. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes
	16. Object to the consideration of a question	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
	15. Divide a motion	To consider its parts separately	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	14. Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No
Subsidiary	13. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	10. Take from the table	To consider tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	8. Previous question	To force an immediate vote	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	7. Limit or extend debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	Yes	Yes-T	2/3	No
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	5. Refer to a committee *	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	4. Amend an amendment *	To modify an amendment	1/3	Yes	No	Majority	No
Main	3. Amend *	To modify a motion	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority	No
	2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	1. Main motion	To introduce a business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No

\* No. 5 should include:

1. How appointed?
2. The number
3. Report when or to what standing committee

T = Time

\* Nos. 3 and 4 by:

1. Adding (inserting)
2. Striking (deleting)
3. Substituting

# Congress Strategy

- Politicizing - caucus with your chamber whenever possible. Be a part of the conversations about agendas, rules of the day, etc...
  - That also means that you should include others.
  - Judges don't see it (always), but it often sets tone.
- Avoid giving two speeches on the same topic. (And, Please, Please, Please (thank you  
Sabrina Carpenter) don't switch sides.
- Maximize your speaking time, but know at 2:50 we're basically done. Plan it better.
- Leadership exercise - avoid the propensity to be cliquy.
- Two-three speeches and then...

# Congress Strategy

- Maximize questions - with breaks in between.
- Don't check out - "if you sit you lose".
- Appropriate motions.
- Encourage participation - don't maneuver to prevent it.
- Tracking:
  - Precedence and Recency: Speeches
  - Recency: Speeches

# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING



Tyler Eval

We value your  
feedback.  
Please complete  
conference evaluation  
after your last session.

