

TED TURNER DEBATE

The Executive Council has established a new debate event and Mr. Ted Turner, founder of CNN, has agreed to have this new debate event, based upon the show "Crossfire", named Ted Turner Debate.

The topic for October and November is:

***Resolved:* Commercial airline pilots should be armed in the cockpit.**

Ted Turner Debate is new!

There will be a new topic each month announced at www.nflonline.org the 15th day of the *previous* month. If the 15th is on a weekend, the topic will be online Friday night.

- * Topics are from current news stories - easily researched in news magazines and online.
- * A topic lasts only one month. No student gets left behind if they are in other activities. [i.e. A football player may start in December with a new topic].
- * Like a football game the contest begins with a coin flip. The winner of the toss may select the **side** [pro or con] **OR** select the **speaker order** [begin the debate or have last speech]. The loser of the toss chooses speaker order (if the winner has chosen side of the topic) **OR** chooses side (if winner has chosen speaker order.)

Please Note: The negative may begin the debate as first speaker and argue against the topic.

Here are the **Time Limits**:

Team A Speaker 1	4 min
Team B Speaker 1	4 min
Crossfire (between A1 & B1)	3 min
Team A Speaker 2	4 min
Team B Speaker 2	4 min
Crossfire (between A2 & B2)	3 min
A1 summary	2 min
B1 summary	2 min
Grand Crossfire (all speakers participate)	3 min
A2 Last Shot	1 min
B2 Last Shot	1 min

2 min prep time per team
35 minutes total time

Ted Turner Debate is exciting!

* The CX periods are **crossfire** periods (like the TV show "Crossfire" on CNN) and both speakers may ask and answer questions in a polite but argumentative exchange. (The **first** question is asked **to** the speaker who just finished). There is also a **Grand Crossfire** for all four debaters.

*The "**last shot**" is a last desperate attempt to "grasp victory from the jaws of defeat." Each "last shot" speaker has one minute to present the one (and only one!) argument s/he thinks will win the debate.

*Ted Turner Debate is audience and media debate. The speaking must be very communicative. All judges must be ordinary citizens -- no debate coaches (unless they are classroom teachers), no college or ex-college debaters.

* No plan, no counterplan, no kritiks (critiques), no spread, no spew are allowed.

Ted Turner Debate begins now!

*Practice and local trophy tournaments in Ted Turner Debate should begin immediately.

*Each NFL district will offer a Ted Turner Debate contest and the winning team will qualify for nationals.

- No student in Ted Turner Debate may double enter at the district or national tournament (but may enter district Congress).
- Up to four teams may be entered by each school. One team is free and above quota. Other teams count against quota.

For more information see the November, December and January *Rostrums*. The *Rostrum* is online the first of each month at www.nflonline.org.

TED TURNER DEBATE

Q and A about NFL's new event

The Coin Flip

Q How does a Ted Turner Debate round begin?

A With a flip of a coin between the competing teams.

Q Why a coin flip?

A The coin toss adds an element of uncertainty and teaches students strategy, since depending on the toss a team may choose to be pro or con or may choose to speak first or last.

Q How is the flip conducted?

A A coin is tossed by one team and called by the other team. The team which wins the flip may choose EITHER the *side* of the topic they wish to defend (pro or con) OR the *speaking position* they wish to have (begin the debate or end the debate). Once the coin toss winners select their favorite option (i.e. they choose to have the last speech) then the other team makes a choice within the other option (i.e. pro or con). The analogy here is to football: Toss the coin and the winner chooses to kick or receive OR the side of the field they wish to defend.

Q Could the con side go first?

A Indeed. There is no presumption or burden of proof in Ted Turner Debate as in policy debate. The pro side wishes to convince the audience that the topic should be adopted; the con side wishes to convince the audience that the proposition should be rejected. So the con side, knowing the topic, can argue against it as first speaker.

Q Why not just alternate sides?

A Invitational tournament directors may choose alternation but NFL suggests flipping. Alternating sides locks the pro as first speaker and the con as last speaker. It is much fairer for students to have the choice of side or speaker position. All NFL contests will use the flip.

Crossfire

Q What is crossfire?

A Both debaters "hold the floor." But the first question must be asked by an opponent *to* the speaker who just finished speaking. After that question and answer, either debater may question and/or answer at will.

Q Won't this create confusion?

A Perhaps, initially. But soon, as students practice the format, they will learn valuable lessons: that an advocate may be more effective with good answers than asking questions; that good questions must be brief; that filibuster answers will be exposed; that rudeness will be penalized by judges.

Q Ted Turner Debate sounds like TV debate shows?

A Right! Capital Gang, Crossfire, McLaughlin Group *et al* do this each week. Crossfire adds excitement to the debate process which attracts audiences and the media. Your principal will love to see a Ted Turner Debate! (Would you let your principal see a policy debate?).

Q Won't debaters abuse this format?

A Not if they want to be successful! Adult judges from the community will be using a ballot which calls for questions to be "brief" and answers to be "on point". Contestants will be penalized for rudeness and poor communication.

Q What is the Grand Crossfire?

A All four debaters have the floor to interact with questions and answers. This is a real test of team work. The first question is asked by the team that had the first summary to the team which had the last summary. After that, any debater may question or answer.

Q Does the judge ever ask questions?

A No. But this is an option that may be explored at a later NFL conference which will evaluate this new event.

Q I'm still worried that the crossfire periods will be "Towers of Babel"

A The judge is chairperson of the round and may halt any crossfire out of control. After an initial trial process most debaters will learn that interrupting, shouting, filibustering (all of which may also occur in Policy and L/D cross examination periods) are counter productive.

Q How can students be taught cross examination skills?

A Read James Copeland's book *Cross Examination in Debate*, National Textbook Co. (shameless plug!); read pages TA7 and TA8 of the NFL Manual; read John Munkman, *The Technique of Advocacy*, Butterworth (U.K.); read the *Lost Art of Cross Examination* by J. W. Ehrlich, Dorset Press; read the *Art of Cross Examination* by Francis L. Wellman, Dorset Press [check for used copies at abebooks.com. The Munkman is British so Amazon.com (U.K.) might be best]. Also, check your library.

Last Shot

Q What is the "Last Shot"?

A Too often debates are muddled by racing rebuttals trying to cover every point and failing to crystallize the key issues: The "Last Shot" allows one speaker on each team to argue only *one* point -- the point that the debater believes will win the debate. This speech might begin "Judge this is why you should vote (pro or con)" and then present one's single best argument. "Last Shot" trains

students to choose what is vital to decision-making. If more than one argument presented in the last shot period, that team is given a loss!

Summary Speeches

Q Are the summary speeches the same as rebuttals?

A Yes. Each team should summarize key arguments it is winning and refute the important arguments it is losing.

Q Can new information be presented in summary and last shot speeches?

A Yes. Facts, opinions, statistics -- evidence of all kinds are legal and welcome to advance the debate. New *arguments* in summary and last shot speeches are forbidden. An answer in response to an argument originally presented by the opposition is not a new argument.

Topics and Research

Q When are topics announced?

A A new topic will be announced the first day of each month at www.nflonline.org.

Q Who chooses the topics?

A This trial year: Donus Roberts (c), Robert Jones (NFL Extemp Topic Chair), and James Copeland (NFL Secretary). A topic committee will be set up as in L/D debate by the Council to begin work next summer.

Q How should topics be researched?

A Newspapers, news magazines, online news sites, books.

Q Is evidence necessary?

A Yes. This is a debate event. Arguments must be supported by evidence.

Q How much evidence should be presented?

A Ted Turner Debate is audience debate. A spread or spew of evidence will be punished by a loss. Present enough evidence to prove your arguments but not so much as to destroy good communication with a lay judge.

Q Are kritiks and counterplans banned?

A Yes. There is no plan required so a counterplan would be irrelevant. Kritiks, which are off topic arguments, are not allowed. Ted Turner Debate should stick to issues within the proposition -- not outside issues.

Judges

Q Who judges?

A Almost any adult in the community: salesmen, librarians, retired teachers, business people -- a typical American jury. College debaters and debate coaches who are not classroom teachers in a high school may *not* judge.

Q How should a judge evaluate a last shot argument?

A Each debater will select what s/he believes is *the* voting issue; the judge should vote on one of these unless the judge feels the last shots have ignored the critical issue.

Q Why are judges required to identify their voting issue?

A In order to make sure arguments play a part in the decision. Although superior communication must be rewarded, Ted Turner Debate is *debate*, not just public speaking.

Ballot

Q Why are there no speaker points?

A Speaker points have no real analogy in the real world. Community judges using a school grade based system (A, B, C, D) will provide more accurate feedback for debaters.

Q How can speaker awards be determined?

A Speaker awards are not required. If awards are given, perhaps they can be based upon the greatest number of A grades scored by each speaker.

Q With no speaker points, how are ties to be broken?

A Suggestions: If the teams have met, the winner proceeds; or strength of opposition, where each team's score is based upon the total number of wins achieved by the teams it debated; or the team with greater number of A's, B's, etc.

NFL Rules

Q How many NFL points does Ted Turner Debate earn?

A 6 for a Win and 3 for a loss; Maximum of 500 points (exclusive of district and nationals) in the debate category.

Q May students double enter in Ted Turner Debate and another event at the NFL district tournament?

A No. But they may enter Ted Turner Debate and Congress.

Q Why can't students in Ted Turner Debate double enter and double qualify?

A Ted Turner Debate is a trial event. Trial events in the past (Duo) have not allowed double entry. And, the purpose of this new event is to attract new schools and new students to NFL, not create another contest for current NFL participants to win more trophies!

Q How many Ted Turner Debate teams may a school enter in the district tournament?

A One team which is above quota; up to 3 more which are part of a school's entry quota based upon degrees.

Preparation

Q What can a student do to be successful in Ted Turner Debate?

A Mainly learn to speak well. This is public debate to lay audiences. Jargon, spread, spew, acronyms and the arcane nuances of policy and L/D debating will be counterproductive.

Q What can a student study to be successful?

A Students and coaches may wish to read *Public Argument* by Robert O. Weiss, University Press of America, or the long essay by Bill Davis in the November *Rostrum*, *The A-Ha Experience*.