

Comfort

There are two kinds of comfort at debate tournaments, physical and mental. A good TD looks to both kinds.

Physical comfort

- Rounds need to be in spaces appropriate to good debating. It is one thing to dump a hundred first-time novices into the boys' gym and hope for the best, and another thing entirely to dump the varsity LDers working on their second TOC bid into that same space. If your room designation is "First stall on the left in the men's room," you need to rethink things. A tournament has as much space as it has good rooms for rounds. At the point where you run out of such space, draw the line. People are paying money to attend your tournament. Crappy spaces are a surefire guarantee that you'll get bad press in social media and fewer attendees next year.
- Think through the food. If you're feeding your attendees, no doubt your fees reflect this, meaning that those students are paying for that lunch. Make sure there's options for vegans and vegetarians and gluten-averse and everything else you can think of. Offer simple salads. Act as if you have to eat the food yourself. (As a corollary to this, forbid your own school's students bringing in food from outside. It is the height of bad manners to serve debate ziti to the masses while your kids are scarfing down lobster rolls and handmade chips at the registration table.)
- If possible, provide even better food to the judges. Get your parents in on this one. Nothing college student judges like more than decent food. And lots of it. This gives your teams' parents something useful to do.

- The first thing to arrive in the morning in your judges' lounge had better be coffee.
- Make sure students and judges have good places to hang out. They should be separate (although plenty of coaches prefer to hang out with their students). They should be big enough. Students need an auditorium or cafeteria where they all fit comfortably on decent seats, where they can relax and prep and nap and whatever. Judges need quieter spaces that are even more comfortable.

Mental comfort

- Tournament attendees are hungry for information. When's the next round, what are they breaking to, what are the judge obligations—all of this matters. Your best bet is to keep your Live Doc active and up-to-date before and during the festivities. And if a change is monumental, send a tournament-wide email informing everyone about it.
- Equip your tournament with a concierge table. Which requires its own separate discussion.