

## The Concierge Table

Where do people at your tournament go if they have a question? Where do people go if they need ballots (and there's always a few PF parents who do, plus the occasional loose-brained LD or Policy judge)? Where do people go if they need help setting up accounts on tabroom.com? Where do people go if they need directions to room 101?

Once upon a time, a tournament had ballot tables. (Then again, once upon a time, a tournament had ballots.) For all practical purposes, the ballot table was where attendees, be they judge or contestant, communicated with the tournament. And as a general rule, the ballot table was where the cool kids from your school all congregated and ignored the judges or contestants who wanted to communicate with the tournament, while they were instead engaged in eating takeout food, binge-watching *Game of Thrones*, or otherwise being useless.

Those days are over.

A good tournament needs a concierge table, a tournament hub with the job of acting as liaison to your tournament. Since they no longer need to distribute ballots, they have only one job: helping your guests.

- The concierge staff is two or three of your best and brightest. Presumably this means your top seniors on the team, the ones you trust the most, who know the most, who've been at every other tournament you've run over the years.
- The only people at the table should be the people working the table, on their side of the table. It is not the tournament playground. The rest of the team needs to find something useful to do somewhere else.

- The table needs to be very close to the tab room. A table seventeen miles away from the adults running things is a table in the middle of nowhere, incapable of anything.
- The workers at the table need to know that they are NOT running the tournament, they are running the help desk. They do not change pairings, they do not reassign judges. If something is needed at that level, they connect with the tab room (which is very close to them) to make it so.
- A table should look like a table, not a collection of food containers, computers, textbooks, poker decks and anything else that gets in the way of the people at the table and your customers. If the concierge staff needs to eat, they can do so in the cafeteria. They are at the table to do the job of running the table.
- If anyone sitting at your table is, or would be, a highly preferred judge, then find someone else for the table. That is, don't put in alums who should be judging. Ditto if you need judges in your novice division.
- The table should never be unattended. Ever.
- If you're actually collecting ballots, the table needs to understand how ballots work, and to check each one carefully. It's easier to find the judge standing in front of you than to find the judge who dropped off the inaccurate ballot a half hour ago and then immediately drove off to Starbucks.
- There are worse places for the TD to be during the tournament than within hailing distance of the concierge table (which, as we said, is also very close to tab).