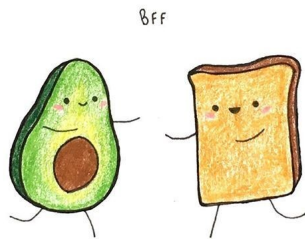
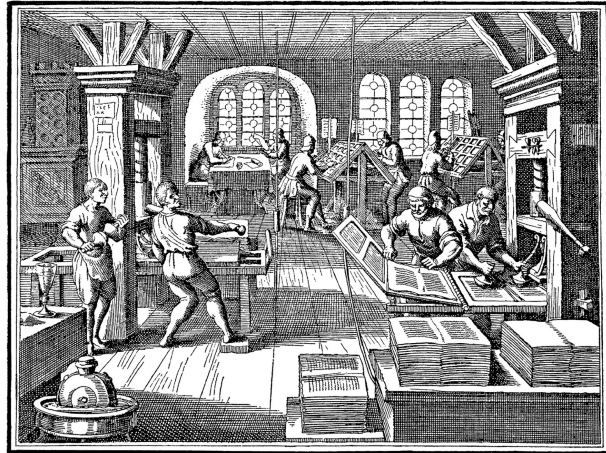


How to be an E-Judge

Once upon a time, we printed up ballots for every judge, handed them out at a ballot table (after carefully instructing our ballot table managers on the ins and outs of the alphabet, and how arranging ballots from A to Z would probably be a better idea than whatever nonsense they might be doing), collected them back from the judges many, many hours later, and then laboriously copied the results onto index cards. We would then repeat the whole process for the next round.



Then we—humanity in general, not any tab room in particular—invented the automobile, kale, avocado toast, and wifi. The printed ballot went the way of the dodo, replaced by the beautiful thing known as the e-ballot. Tournaments ran faster and more efficiently, and judges were relieved of the endless trek back and forth from the ballot table. Still, life wasn't all peaches and cream.

With paper ballots, we in the tab room knew if you picked up your ballot, because, well, it wasn't on the table anymore. If you didn't pick up your ballot, we had our hired goons find you and forcibly bring you to the table, or fit you with cement boots and bring you to the river, whichever was closer.





With e-ballots, the only way the tab room knows what's going on is if you correctly use the START button. Hitting the START button tells the tab room that you are alive and well and ready to do the thing called judging. Not hitting the START button tells the tab room absolutely nothing. Obviously, for a tournament to run smoothly, the tab room needs to know what's going on.

Here's how it works.

1. You receive a notification via text that you have an assignment.
2. You immediately respond by hitting the START button.
3. You go to the room.

Simple, right? If only.



Not pressing the START button, Scenario 1:

Judge, sleeping in the judges' lounge, is awakened by the notice of an assignment on smartphone and does nothing. A second notice arrives a few minutes later politely reminding the judge to hit START. The judge does nothing yet again. A few minutes later another notice arrives, sans politeness, once more reminding the judge to hit START. The judge does nothing. (As a rule, the more a judge perceives self as

"cool kid," the more nothing a judge does, and the more often a judge does it.) As the posted start time approaches, more and more desperately worded notices arrive begging that the judge hit the START button. The judge, practiced at doing nothing, continues the practice. Once finally settled in the debate room with a fresh latte, the students having arrived and the round definitely having started, the judge, with a satisfying sense of having fulfilled the cool kid credo to the fullest, begrudgingly hits the START button. Heart attacks in the tab room may or may not have occurred in the meanwhile.

Not pressing the START button, Scenario 2:

Judge, sleeping in the judges' lounge, is awakened by the notice of an assignment on smartphone and does not hit START. Despite threats to life and limb over the next half hour, judge persists in not hitting START. A few minutes before the round is scheduled, the tab room, assuming with good reason that the judge has been abducted by the Nazgul, fines the judge as a no-show and assigns another judge to the round. Second judge, not a cool kid but who is nevertheless sleeping in the judges' lounge when awakened by the notice of an assignment on smartphone, immediately hits



A railway share

START

and swiftly makes the journey across mountain and valley and hill and dale, avoiding the Nazgul every step of the way, arriving in the room to find the round already happening with the original judge adjudicating. The second judge, now in a murderous rage over being awakened from a sound sleep for no reason, storms over to the tab room and threatens their lives with a railway share. *After* the round, the original judge, now in a murderous rage over being fined for missing a round they just adjudicated, also

storms over to the tab room and threatens their lives with a railway share. The tabbers are so traumatized that they run screaming into the night, where they are abducted by the Nazgul. Chaos ensues. The tournament grinds to a halt. Everyone goes home. It was all for nothing. The terrorists win.



A Nazgul. Debate tournaments are lousy with them.

Pressing the START button at the right time:

Judge, sleeping in the judges' lounge, is awakened by the notice of an assignment on smartphone and proceeds to hit START as instructed. Judge immediately heads to the room. Both teams are there, and the round begins without a hitch. The heavenly choir sings. The Nazgul are foiled. The terrorists lose. The tournament ends three hours early, doves are released into the air as a sign of lasting peace, and for the first time since the Fillmore Administration Congress passes a bipartisan piece of important legislation.

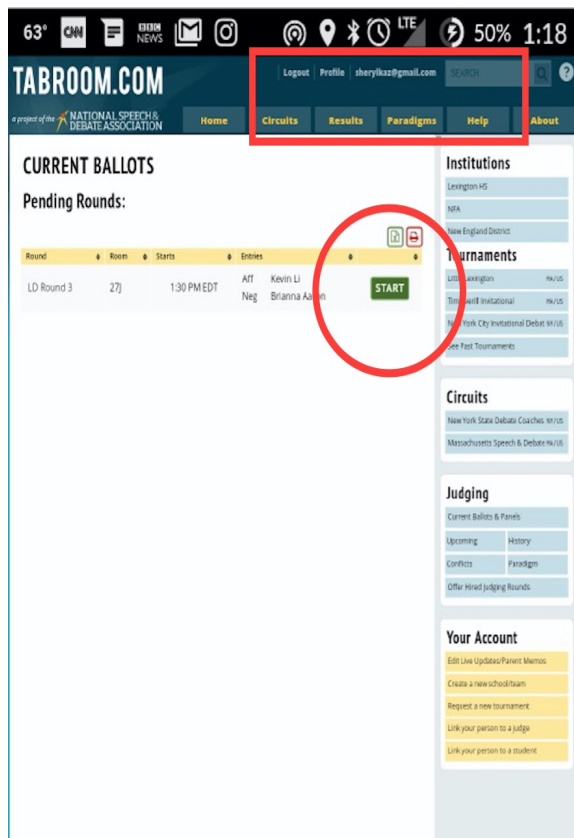


Hold it right there, bub!

Wait a minute, says you. All this talk about a START button. What do you mean, START button? What START button? Where? And must it be in all caps?



An Obama button. This is not the button you are looking for.



If you get a blast from tabroom giving you an assignment, you'll be able to find the **START** button on the tabroom home page on your device. (Remember to log into tabroom first.) This is the page you see when you click on your email address on the top right. The red rectangle in the illustration shows your email address. (All right, it actually shows Sheryl's email address, so it's only your address if you're Sheryl, but you get the idea. Work with me here.)

The circle indicates the position of the **START** button. Hit that button at the right time, and you will be a hero in the eyes of the tab room. Hit that button at the wrong time, or fail to hit it, and the tab room will come down on you like a ton of Nazgul. BTW, the latest versions of tabroom allow us to name the button whatever we want, maybe something like **ACKNOWLEDGE BALLOT**. It is, nonetheless, the same thing.

Results

Probably at some point—when the debaters finally run out of gas and sit down and stare at you accusingly—you will want to enter your results. You will go to tabroom.com and it will ask you to enter your decision, and you will. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Oh, would that it were!

The Right Way to Enter Results:

As soon as your debaters are finished, you should make your decision. You will decide who won and who lost (there has to be both a loser and a winner; there are no draws in debate), and if it's a preliminary round, you have to decide how many points to award them (there are no points in elim rounds).



Enter your results before disclosing your decision. The chief reason for this is so that the tab room can get going as soon as possible on pairing the next round. A secondary reason is to prevent debaters from changing your mind. It is not unheard of for a debater or two to beat a dead horse until it comes back to life and the judges decide to reverse their decisions. But there is no mind-changing after a decision is made, no matter how persuasive a team might be in the 5AR, because there shouldn't be any 5R. Once it's over, it's over. The results are



in. Then you can talk.

Do not start talking and talking and talking and talking and talking before entering your decision. Yes, it is a truth universally acknowledged that a debater in possession of good cases must be in want of a judge's endless bloviating on what happened in the round, often taking longer than the round itself. If you must bloviate till the cows come home, do it *after* you enter your decision. We'll eventually send someone into the room to wake up the debaters who stopped listening to you three hours ago so that they'll make it to their next round on time. As for you, how do feel about judging 0-4 rounds for the rest of your natural days?



Issues



Judge—Are your teams not there?

Judge arrives in room, and finds that one of the teams is missing. Oh, the horror. Oh, the humanity. Judge calls tab and reports a missing team. The tabbers will handle it from there. The angels sing, the Nazgul are foiled, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.



Teams—Is your judge not here?

Both teams arrive, and five minutes after start time there is still no judge, just an empty chair in the back of the room. One of two things can happen. The teams, acting responsibly, can call the tab authorities and report the situation. A new judge will be assigned and show up lickety-split, and all will be well with the world. Or, the teams can wait and wait and wait, little knowing that the assigned judge has been abducted by the Nazgul. When they finally show up back at

the tab room to report a missing person, forty-five minutes after start time, the tab room will give them a double forfeit for being too knuckleheaded to have acted responsibly.



A knucklehead. Debate tournaments are lousy with them.

OMG! The wifi just went down!

Well, there's two possibilities here. You can: A) access tabroom.com on your phone and enter the results that way; or B) you can join the multitude of knuckleheads panicking in the streets. We recommend option A. In fact, we recommend a complete life philosophy that includes both the slogan "Don't Panic" and always carrying a towel, the latter of which is a massively useful aid in traveling the galaxy.



What About Break Rounds and Round Robins?

A very good question. I'm glad we asked it.

As you know, break rounds and RRs have multiple judges. Each judge needs to press the START button independently. This will alert the tab room that all is well with each individual judge, and help them track down the judges who aren't there yet.



Sorry, Mr. Loaf, but two out of three judges ain't good at all, and does not an elimination round make, which is why, as far as anyone can tell, you were never much of a debater in your day.

Despite the independent starting, if a judge is missing from the room, please contact the tab

staff. They have judges up the wazoo, and can provide a satisfactory replacement in the twinkling of an eye. (Or more likely, they usually have to throw in some shmegeggie who was struck by both sides and who would prefer to stay in the judges' lounge working on their immigration status, but beggars can't be choosers. Don't blame them when a judge goes AWOL.)

DETECTIVE DIVISION CIRCULAR No. 11 SEPTEMBER 17, 1930	POLICE DEPARTMENT CITY OF NEW YORK	BE SURE TO FILE THIS CIRCULAR FOR REFERENCE
Police Authorities are Requested to Post this Circular for the Information of Police Officers and File a Copy of it for Future Reference.		
\$5,000.00 REWARD		
		
JOSEPH FORCE CRATER JEWELER OF THE DEPT. OF THE STATE, STATE OF NEW YORK		
DESCRIPTION—Born in the United States—Age, 41 years; height, 6 feet; weight, 185 pounds; mixed grey hair, originally dark brown, thin at top, parted in middle "slicked" down; complexion, medium dark, considerably tanned; brown eyes; false teeth, upper and lower jaw, good physical and mental condition at time of disappearance. Tip of right index finger somewhat mutilated, due to having been recently crushed. Wore brown sack coat and trousers, narrow green stripe, no vest; either a Panama or soft brown hat worn at rakish angle, size 6 1/2, unusual size for his height and weight. Clothes made by Vesoom. Affected colored shirt, size 14 collar, probably bow tie. Wore tortoise-shell glasses for reading. Yellow gold Masonic ring, somewhat worn; may be wearing a yellow gold, square-shaped wrist watch with leather strap.		
Any information should be forwarded to the Detective Division of the Police Department of the City of New York, 240 Centre Street, Phone Spring 3100.		
EDWARD P. MULROONEY, Police Commissioner		
Phone Spring 3100.		



If debaters are missing, most likely they're off prepping somewhere. At a well-run tournament, there is plenty of time between rounds for critiques and prepping, so start times are real, and teams are expected to be in place. If a team has not shown up by the start time, let the tab

room know. We will send out those goons who haven't had anything to do since the elimination of the paper ballot.

Virtual Tournaments

So, says you, there's this little thing called covid-19, and a lot of what was said above refers to tournaments with real physical people in real physical places. What about tournaments with unreal people in unreal places?

Welcome to the new normal.

Much of what we said above remains true. The big difference is that instead of physically getting to your room, you will now be sent to a virtual room. Different tournaments might be running various platforms for their virtual rooms, so we won't pretend to show you the One Way It Is Done. But rest assured that, whatever the platform, they are all more or less the same.



Prepping for virtual tournaments.

The first thing you need to know is on which platform the tournament is running, be it Zoom or Google Meet or NSDA Campus or something else. We cannot urge you strongly enough to test your devices running that software before the tournament. The time *not* to find out that you can't run an app is when an entire tournament is waiting for you to run that app. Responsible tournaments will tell you well in advance what you need to know; make sure you get that information from your coach if it isn't sent to you by the tournament itself. As a general rule, a laptop is the best device for judging, but tablets and even phones can do the job, and phones especially can provide backup if there's a problem with a laptop. Anything that runs the Chrome browser, the standard interface, can do the job.



Both speakers and judges need a quiet, secure place to participate in online events, so find that spot that's right for you. Make sure everyone in your household understands what you are doing, and when you are going to be doing it. Make sure no one in the house is sucking up all your bandwidth: If possible, plug directly into Ethernet.

During the round

All participants should leave their video on. Everyone should be on mute except for the actual speaker.



The judge should actively troubleshoot audio issues caused by technology or the Internet. Don't interrupt for a few seconds of voice pixelation ("robot voice"). Do interrupt if you consistently cannot hear someone because of a tech issue.

The judge should keep track of "tech time", or interruptions where the debate stops because a competitor has been disconnected. After 10 minutes per round—that's the usual tech time allotment—the debate must move on so the tournament isn't delayed. If a call drops during a speech, and a speaker is less than 15 seconds into the speech, then they should just re-give the entire speech. Otherwise, simply figure out the last part that everyone heard and resume from that point.

Special considerations for virtual judging

This is a speech and debate competition, not a video contest. Please remember that having the best possible technology is a privilege not equally shared by everyone. Base your decisions and points on the factors that competitors can control, such as what they say and how they say it. Do not penalize competitors for things they can't control, such as Internet connection speed and video quality.

Please disregard the background that you may see behind the contestant. Every student's home situation is different, and we want everyone to have an equal chance to be seen and heard. We are striving for access over perfection.

When in doubt, err in favor of the contestant. If a speaker needs to mute for a period of time to address a sudden disturbance in their home, then it is perfectly acceptable to allow that speaker to pause and restart, or even to re-deliver the speech in its entirety when the issue has been resolved. We are all doing what we can with what we have where we are!

And finally, turn off messages and alerts on your device while you are judging.



Wait a Minute! I Just Got Fined!!!

When a judge does not show up for an assignment and has to be replaced, this can result in a financial penalty. Coaches are usually notified of the penalty immediately.



No tournament is in the business of milking their guests for extra money via replacement fines. But a tournament must run within a certain time frame. Judges and students both must show up promptly for their assignments. There is really no acceptable excuse for not being where you're supposed to be. Judging at tournaments is a job like any other. How many jobs are there that don't expect you to show up?

If you are fined, don't fight it. Pay the two dollars. On the other hand, if you know that you will have other obligations during a tournament preventing you from judging a particular round, work it out with your coach well in advance of the tournament so that they can cover your absence and keep the tournament running smoothly. It is better to commit yourself completely, but sometimes that is impossible. Be a team player: do the right thing in a timely manner.

Stirring Conclusion

The tab room has only one goal, which is to get the damned tournament over and done with, and to provide great judging in all the rounds. Okay. Two goals, ending and judging, and getting out for decent meals once in a while. Okay. Three goals. Ending, judging, and eating. And listening to the latest yodelling competition recordings between rounds.

Whatever.

Anyhow, we're all in this together. If we all approach tournaments as professionals, a swell time will be had by all.

