

Debating

The debating competition is another step up the public speaking ladder. The standard criteria apply, you have to be audible, well presented and provide nothing to distract your audience from your message.

The step is that you have to speak "off the cuff" on a researched topic. Braintrust is not researched. In the purest form of debate the only material that is used, is that which the proposer introduces, the following three speakers debate on that.

Very difficult, but it makes a nice target. How do you do it?

On obtaining the subject, do your research. Most facts have two sides, they all have many interpretations, it is up to you to pick the interpretation that fits your side of the argument (minor variations of the truth are not that noticeable). Have more facts/cases than will fit in your allotted time, and then use the ones that go against your opposition. Your main speaker can briefly mention a fact/case and then the seconder can expand on your argument.

The only speaker that can fully prepare their four minutes is the proposer; therefore this should be on the nose.

Remember that neither the opposer nor the proposer can introduce any new material in their summing ups. You will lose marks.

Chairman; - The chairman provides the glue to stick the whole thing together and the oil to keep things moving smoothly. Your research is done on the day. Not only do you want the personal details of the speakers, you also want to know if they have any history or experience of/in the subject of the debate. This will show the audience how the speakers can relate to the subject. In the summing up try and be fair and be brief, the old bullet points. While you are doing this try and be invisible, the debate is the important matter.

Give it a whirl, it can be fun.

John Hall

County President