

Parliamentary Procedure LDE Frequently Asked Questions

Answers for questions 1 - 6 provided by Dr. Jim Graham, UW-River Falls

1. Secretary notes - The example sent out from River Falls does not match the criteria that are in the Wisconsin rules. Example...criteria says not to name the seconder...but the example does.

The example that was sent out was over-complete, but was meant to show what minutes could look like. The official rules do not have much written about minutes other than teams have 10 minutes after the meeting to complete them. However, the judges handbook that was sent out does have some notes regarding minutes. The judges handbook highlights some of the big things that judges look for, while Dunbar goes into a little more detail. The difference is the audience who they are written for. The judges handbook is written for someone who knows the basics of what goes into minutes and is looking for tips of things that are generally missed where Dunbar assumes that you have no idea what should go in the minutes. They don't contradict each other, they just choose to go into different details. In this case it was most likely a case of us including more than was needed to be complete, rather than the basic bones of what is needed. Unfortunately we are sometimes over-zealous when it comes to Parli Pro!

Whether or not the name of seconder is there isn't that big of a deal but these are the basic guidelines.

- Separate paragraph for all items
- All main motions (including those withdrawn)
- All secondary motions (including those withdrawn)
- All points of order and appeals
- Name of person making motion
- Name of seconder **NOT** included
- Vote count for motions requiring a 2/3 vote/any counted vote

2. If you get reconsider, take from the table or rescind...are they going to come up as scenarios (like it does at Nationals) or are you supposed to do it to the main motion?

In the instance that one of these motions were assigned, we would be setting up a scenario to assist the team in dispensing with the motions.

3. Method of voting was given out at the Wisconsin workshop (on green sheet) ...but Method of voting is not on the National rules...are you going to do method of voting in Wisconsin?

Regardless of the allowable motions at Nationals, its my opinion that we want our members to be able to understand and utilize any of the motions on the 'green sheet'. Unless the Ag Teachers want to limit the number of eligible motions for contests, I would like to keep them as an option and learning tool.

4. Do debates really need to have 2 points in order to be considered a better debate? or could it rather be one point but with great detail? The great detail should be what makes a great debatequality rather than quantity.

This is one question that is still being worked on. We have been training judges to evaluate the quality of quantity. Two solid (and well debated) points are ideal (we are not looking for three) but we would rather see one solid, well thought out point rather than two "We don't have time or money for this."

5. Are you still sticking with not "feeling" or "thinking" during debates?

Most definitely! Debates should be formulated on information, and merit of the motion. Personal feelings and beliefs, while being fundamental to a persons position, are often based upon emotion, and can open a debate up to a personal attack. As Doc used to basically state, people don't necessarily care about your feelings, but do care about your facts.

6. Limiting it to having one judge as the debate judge gives that judge the most power....thoughts on this? I believe the top score given at nationals for a debate was a 14....the average was a 4 to 6... if the judge is giving insane points like 14 to 20's...that judge is figuring out who won....just a concern

Dividing the judging responsibilities allows judges to really focus on the different aspects of the contest. Not dividing responsibilities forces judges to try to balance too much at one time and scoring will not be as efficient and judges would miss a lot of parts of the contest. With the old format, each round had basically a sequence that allowed judges to follow each individual aspect and score each accordingly. In the previous format, there were times when I've missed certain things the chair did, or something in the debate because I was attempting to score one section while something else was taking place. By allowing the judges to focus on a specific segment, the intent is to provide a more consistent and fair scoring. We have been training our judges in to score a specific aspect of the contest, allowing them to focus more intently on that aspect. Over the years we have had experience judging the Minnesota Parli contests, and this is how the judging is set up there. As long as the judge is fair and consistent in evaluating their section, it should all balance out. If this does become an issue, then my suggestion would be to amend point totals rather than go back to a system where all judges score everything. In order for that to occur, the score cards and complexity would have to be changed.

7. Each team member has to make two motions. Are they given both motions or do they have to come up with the second one on their own? Do they fail every motion? (Answer provided by Derrick Meyer, FFA Advisor Amery)

They will be given one motion that will be highlighted on the sheet in front of them. The second one the student has to make up themselves...easy ones to do are:

Fix the time to which to adjourn

Take a recess

Rise to a question of privilege

Parli. Inquiry

Request for information

Appeal the decision of the chair

Sometimes we do amend...refer to a committee...postpone to a certain time if we are trying to get more debates

(Additional answer provided by Emily Watson - UW-River Falls) Students do not NEED to fail everything, but often times it will save time to fail motions. Or based on the amount of debates the students need to make, they would not want to pass as they need to keep the meeting moving to get in their debates.

(Answer provided by Derrick Meyer, FFA Advisor Amery) I agree...we almost always pass the amendment...because you are showing the judges that you are answering the who, why, where and how. We also pass others that make sense to pass...like maybe we end everything by referring it to a committee...or we postpone it to our next meeting.

In the new format does each team member have to debate? We watched the video and it seemed everyone on the team debated the motion.

(Answer provided by Derrick Meyer, FFA Advisor Amery)

Each person should debate 4 times...it is crucial...since this speaking contest has to be about knowing how to debate...the more debates...up to 4/person...the better your team will do.... having said that...no not everyone needs to debate each debatable motion. We always try to get the maker of the motion to get two debates on that motion...then everyone else at least one on that motion...better debates count as more points...so it should be noted that quality debates are important...go into detail...we figure that each debate should be no longer than 32 seconds on average...than you can make it...we have some that go longer than that...and some that go less...it should be also noted that I am not a big fan that you have to have 2 reasons in a good debate...I hear that all of the time...but a good debate goes into great detail...it could be one reason but explained well...i am not sure how that will be approached in Wisconsin? But I think we should reward excellent debates whether they have two reasons or not...the detail is the important part.

(Answer provided by Hannah Eckblad - UW-River Falls in her email that provided an example card and the judges manual. These items are posted on the FFA website)

When the student sits down and receives their card, a motion is underlined. This would be the member's assigned motion. Their second motion can be anything that is not on the assigned sheet and has not been used by another member already. Keep in mind that the secretary will be assigned a motion, will have to do an extra motion, and debate 4 times in addition to taking minutes BUT they will also have 10 minutes after the contest to write the minutes with the Chair, so during the contest, they can just take notes to turn into minutes. The Chair can also take notes.

The main motion shouldn't be assigned, therefore, it can count as a member's additional motion. Just remember that the main motion that is assigned is the only main motion you can use throughout the contest. Once it is disposed of, judging stops.