

Power-Pairing Rules for the 2018 World Schools Debating Championships



‘Power-pairing’ is being introduced at the World Schools Debating Championships for a 1-year trial period of WSDC 2018 in Zagreb.

The World Schools Debating Championships Tournament Committee has approved the following temporary amendments to the WSDC Rules for WSDC 2018:

- (a) Amendments to 6.2 - 6.4 of the WSDC Rules for WSDC 2018
- (b) ‘Schedule 3: Procedures for Power-Pairing at the World Schools Debating Championships’ shall be added to the end of the Rules document for WSDC 2018

The text of these temporary amendments to the WSDC Rules is below.

Amendments to 6.2 - 6.4 of the WSDC Rules:

[Note: Power-pairing will only be used if there are at least 24 competing teams. 6.2 affirms that the present system of a pre-determined draw will be used if there are fewer than 24 teams.]

6.2 11-23 Teams

If the total number of teams at a Championship is more than 10 but less than 24, each team shall debate 8 other teams in the preliminary rounds in a draw conducted before the Championship using a system designed to achieve approximately equal and fair sets of opponents for all teams.

6.3 24 or More Teams

If the total number of teams at a Championship is 24 or more, the draw shall be created using a power-pairing system following the guidelines set out in Schedule 3 (Procedures for Power-Pairing at the World Schools Debating Championships).

6.4 Preliminary Rounds Draw

(a) At least 2 weeks before the first day of debates at the Championship, the Host shall send the participating teams the full preliminary rounds draw if the number teams is less than 24, or the draw for preliminary rounds 1 and 2 if the number of teams is 24 or more.

(b) Once the draw has been released as required by 6.4 (a), amendments can only be made if:

(i) In the judgement of the Chief Adjudicators, the amendments will not significantly affect the fairness and balance of the draw, and

(ii) All teams affected agree to the new draw.

[Note: 6.4 (c) applies only if there are fewer than 24 teams. It does not apply if there is power-pairing.]

(c) In the event that a team withdraws from a tournament involving less than 24 teams and a new draw is not made, all teams who would have debated against the team which has withdrawn are taken to have won the debate by forfeit if they win at least a majority of their other debates but are otherwise taken to have lost the debate by forfeit, and shall be awarded judges' ballots for that debate according to the following formula:

(i) if the average number of judges in the team's favour in its other debates is higher than 2.5, it receives 3 judge's ballots for that debate;

(ii) if the average number of judges in the team's favour in its other debates is higher than 1.5 but less than or equal to 2.5, it receives 2 judge's ballots for that debate.

(iii) if the average number of judges in the team's favour in its other debates is higher than 0.5 but less than or equal to 1.5, it receives 1 judge's ballot for that debate;

(iv) if the average number of judges in the team's favour in its other debates is less than or equal to 0.5, it receives no judge's ballots for that debate.

(d) In the event that a team withdraws from a tournament involving more than 24 teams, the procedures followed shall be those outlined in Schedule 3 (Procedures for Power-Pairing at the World Schools Debating Championships).

Text for 'Schedule 3: Procedures for Power-Pairing at the World Schools Debating Championships':

1. Purpose of this Schedule and responsibility for creating the draw

1.1 This Schedule outlines procedures which shall be followed when creating the draw for the preliminary rounds of the World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC) with the draw created using a 'power-pairing' system at the Championship.

1.2 The procedure for assigning preliminary rounds at the Championship shall be determined by the Chief Adjudicator(s), with the assistance of Chief Adjudicators Panel (CAP) and the appointed Tab Master(s) in accordance with the WSDC Rules and the procedures outlined in this schedule. The first two preliminary rounds will be paired via a computer tabulation programme. Beginning with round 3, a computer tabulation programme operated by the Tab Master(s) acting in accordance with the provisions outlined in this Schedule, will pair the round and assign the judges. The CAs, with the assistance of the CAP, will make final decisions regarding judge placement for each round.

1.3 The Chief Adjudicator(s), CAP and Tab Master(s) shall consult and receive advice from the Convenors of the Championship, the WSDC Ltd Board of Directors, and any relevant WSDC Ltd Working Groups when establishing the computer tabulation programme and the draw procedures.

2. Creating the draw for preliminary rounds 1 and 2 (seeded draw)

2.1 The draw for preliminary rounds 1 and 2 shall be a seeded draw instead of being power-paired.

2.2 For the purposes of determining pre-seeding for preliminary rounds 1 and 2, each team in the Championship shall be placed in groups A, B, C or D.

2.3 The nations will be seeded based on each nation's final ranking at the end of the Championship over the previous 3 Championships.

2.4 Nations which have not entered a team in any of the previous 3 Championships shall be placed at the bottom of the seeding order.

2.5 Once seeded, as far as is reasonably and practically possible the top 25% will be placed in Group A, the second 25% in Group B, the third 25% in Group C, and the bottom 25% in Group D.

2.6 As far as is reasonably and practically possible, each team from Group A and Group D will draw a team from Group B in one of the two 'seeded draw' rounds and will draw a team from Group C in the other, with teams being paired up using a computer tabulation programme or random draw method (thus making each team's pre-set draw, on average, as equal as possible).

2.7 In situations where the total number of teams is not divisible by 4, the Chief Adjudicators shall determine what adjustments need to be made to this system in order to ensure that every team's draw for preliminary rounds 1 and 2 remains as fair and even as possible, keeping the adjustments as minimal as possible.

2.8 Each team shall have 1 debate in proposition and 1 debate in opposition over preliminary rounds 1 and 2.

2.9 Preliminary rounds 1 and 2 shall both be prepared debates.

3. Creating the draw for preliminary rounds 3 to 8 (power-paired draw)

3.1 For preliminary rounds 3 to 8, the draw shall be power-paired using an approved computer tabulation programme, administered by the Tab Master (provisions 3.2 - 3.11 explain the priorities which are to be established within the computer programme).

3.2 At the end of each preliminary round from preliminary round 2 onwards, a league table shall be calculated by the computer tabulation programme for the purpose of preparing the draw for the next round, ranking teams based on the following criteria in this order of priority:

- (i) The number of debates which the team has won, followed by
- (ii) The total number of judges' ballots in favour of the team, followed by
- (iii) The average judges' scores awarded to the team.

3.3 When creating the draw for each preliminary round from round 3 onwards, teams will be divided into brackets made up of teams which have won the same number of debates over the preliminary rounds which have already been completed.

3.4 As far as possible, each team will be drawn to debate against another team from the same bracket as them.

3.5 If it is necessary for a team to be 'pulled-up' to a draw bracket in order to ensure that every team in the bracket has an opponent, the team which is 'pulled-up' shall be taken from the bracket immediately below (or the closest available bracket below in the event that other provisions within these guidelines prevent this).

3.6 If possible, teams shall be 'pulled-up' to a higher bracket no more than once during preliminary rounds 3 - 8, unless having the team be 'pulled-up' more than once is necessary to allow with other

provisions within these guidelines to be maintained.

3.7 If possible, the team which is 'pulled-up' to a bracket shall be the team from the bracket immediately below whose opponents from all the preliminary rounds which have already been completed have the lowest average rank in the preliminary round league tables heading into current round (or the available team whose opponents have the lowest average rank on the league table subject to the other provisions within these guidelines).

3.8 Subject to the conditions outlined in within these guidelines, the computer tabulation programme shall pair teams up in a manner which is as close as possible to the following system:

(a) Highest-ranked team on the league table within the bracket against lowest-ranked team on the league table within the bracket,

(b) 2nd highest-ranked team on the league table within the bracket against 2nd lowest-ranked team on the league table within the bracket, etc.

3.9 Teams shall not debate against each other more than once during the 8 preliminary rounds, so the computer tabulation programme shall make adjustments to the system outlined in 3.8 to avoid repeat matchups (while nevertheless keeping as closely as possible to the system outlined in 3.8).

3.10 As far as possible, the computer tabulation programme shall ensure that as many teams as possible shall have 4 debates in proposition and 4 debates in opposition over the 8 preliminary rounds; however, where necessary, the computer tabulation programme shall be able to assign some teams to have 5 debates on 1 side and 3 debates on the other side in order to meet other provisions within these guidelines.

3.11 As far as possible, the computer tabulation programme shall ensure that as many teams as possible shall have 2 prepared debates in proposition and 2 prepared debates in opposition as well as 2 impromptu debates in proposition and 2 impromptu debates in opposition over the 8 preliminary rounds; however, where necessary, the computer tabulation programme shall be able to assign some teams to have 3 prepared debates on 1 side and 1 prepared debate on the other side and/or 3 impromptu debates on 1 side and 1 impromptu debate on the other side in order to meet other provisions within these guidelines, provided that the requirements of 3.10 are met.

4. Procedures regarding walkovers and swing teams

4.1 In the event that the number of competing teams is an odd number, the Host shall arrange for a 'swing team' debate in the preliminary rounds in order to ensure an even number of teams.

4.2 The swing team shall be made up of 3 to 5 students who shall meet the age criteria and education status criteria for debaters set out in the WSDC Rules, however the members of the swing team do not necessarily have to come from the same nation.

4.3 Adjudicators shall judge the swing team in the same way as a competing team in the Championship, however the swing team and its members shall not be considered to be an official competing team and thus shall not be eligible to qualify for the break rounds or receive any team or individual speaker awards.

4.4 For a swing team participating in preliminary round 1 and preliminary round 2, the Chief Adjudicators shall determine whether it is more appropriate to place the swing team in Group A, B, C or D based on the background of the debaters in the swing team.

4.5 In the event of a team being unable to participate in a round, the following shall happen:

(i) The team which is unable to participate in the round shall be awarded a 3-0 defeat for the round along with (for the purpose of rankings at the end of the preliminary rounds) a team score which is equivalent to the team's average score for the preliminary rounds in which the team did participate.

(ii) The team's opponents in the draw for that round shall be awarded a 3-0 victory along with (for the purpose of rankings at the end of the preliminary rounds) a team score which is equivalent to that team's average score for the preliminary rounds in which the team did participate, unless the Chief Adjudicators decide that it is possible to amend the draw for the round to ensure that every competing team participating in the round has an appropriate opponent by adding or withdrawing the swing team in a manner which, in the Chief Adjudicators' opinion, does not significantly affect the fairness and integrity of the draw.

4.6 Where a team is involved in a walkover, for the purpose of rankings at the end of the preliminary rounds the team shall be given a team score for that round equivalent to their average score for the preliminary rounds in which the team did debate.