

Connecticut Debate Association

Handbook of Extemporaneous Debate

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This document is intended to be a clear statement of the procedures and policies of extemporaneous debate as practiced by the Connecticut Debate Association in its extemporaneous debate tournaments. The Connecticut Debate Association is not responsible for any interpretation or application of the handbook's content in actual practice. The Connecticut Debate Association does not represent or warrant that the actual conduct of any of its debates or debate tournaments will follow these procedures and policies precisely, or that a particular judge or group of judges will interpret them consistently in any given debate contest. The Connecticut Debate Association reserves the right to depart from these policies and procedures at the discretion of the Association or at the discretion of the Association's Executive Director.

The Connecticut Debate Association would like to acknowledge the work of the many coaches, teachers, students, parents and other volunteers who have contributed to this work, either directly or through their participation in the many Connecticut Debate Association events over the years.

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CDA: A Few Questions Answered

What is the Connecticut Debate Association (CDA)?

The CDA is an organization which hosts competitive interscholastic Extemporaneous Debate tournaments at the high school level throughout the state during the academic year. Participation is open to Connecticut member high schools. The CDA is under the purview of CAS, the Connecticut Association of Schools.

What is CDA Extemporaneous Debate?

The primary defining characteristic of Extemporaneous Debate is that the participants do not research or prepare their cases in advance of the tournament. The Resolution (statement to be debated at a tournament) is accompanied by several pages of resource material and is given to the debaters approximately one hour before the first round of competition. During that time, the debaters prepare their cases for both the Affirmative (supporting the Resolution) and Negative (opposing the Resolution) because they will debate each case in alternating rounds during the tournament. Each team is composed of a pair of students (typically from the same school) who share the responsibilities of debating against an opposing team. A Judge decides and scores each match.

How can I participate in CDA tournaments?

To participate in CDA tournaments, interested schools must do the following:

- Join the Connecticut Debate Association by completing the membership form and submitting it with a check for CDA's annual dues. Forms are available upon request.
- Secure the commitment of a responsible adult who will coach their students, register them for tournaments by email, provide their transportation to and from CDA events, and accompany their students to all CDA events and be responsible for their supervision and emergency contact information.
- Secure judging volunteers. Participating schools must provide volunteers to serve as judges at each tournament. They must bring one judge, plus an additional judge for every one to four debaters who will participate in a tournament.

For More Information

Included in this handbook, you will find details of the form and structure of Extemporaneous Debate, effective debating and effective judging. You will find a section on important CDA Policies that tournament participants are expected to understand and uphold as well as copies of tournament judging documents. CDA membership information, bylaws and other information may be obtained by emailing CDA at: InfoCDAdebate@aol.com or by contacting the Connecticut Association of Schools at www.casciac.org or (203) 250-1111 ext. 3020.

Extemporaneous Debate Tournaments

Tournament Oversight: CDA tournaments are governed by the CDA Executive Director and Assistant Director respectively, or their designated representative. Questions, problems and concerns should be directed to them. They may be clearly identified by their name badges and can most frequently be found in the TAB room.

Tournament Structure: There are two competitive divisions, Novice for the newer debaters and Varsity for the more experienced debaters. For both divisions there are three competitive rounds, each team (pair) debating against another team in its own division. The first two rounds are randomly matched; the 3rd round is power-matched. There is a 4th round championship match between the top two Varsity teams. At the end of the tournament, trophies are awarded in both divisions, after which students receive copies of the judge's ballots for their own matches.

Tournament Participation: Tournaments are held approximately once a month, October through April. Participation criteria are listed below.

- Membership: Tournament participation is open to CDA member schools. Prospective member schools may contact the Executive Director to make arrangements to observe a tournament prior to joining CDA.
- Registration: Participation at tournaments requires advance registration. School's coaches will receive the registration information, including deadlines, via email.
- Supervision: To attend any tournament, students must be accompanied by an adult who possesses their emergency contact information and agrees to be responsible for supervising all students in their charge.
- Providing Judges: All participating schools must bring adult volunteers to serve as judges as follows: 1 initial judge to meet CDA staffing needs, plus one for every set of 1-4 debaters. Therefore, 1-4 debaters = 2 judges, 5-8 = 3 judges, 9-12 = 4 judges and so on. The initial judge may be waived for schools that are hosting tournaments or providing full-time CDA staff volunteers. Coaches should have their prospective judges read the judges' training information prior to the tournament date. In addition, CDA will hold a Judges Training Workshop at each tournament, prior to the beginning of competition.
- Observing CDA Policies: All tournament attendees are responsible to know and observe all CDA Policies. It is the responsibility of each school's coach to insure that all of their attendees are aware of these policies. Coaches are expected to uphold the observance of these policies by all of their school's attendees. These policies are contained in the "Important CDA Policies" portion of this handbook.

Extemporaneous Debate Form and Structure

Extemporaneous Debate Form: The primary defining characteristic of Extemporaneous Debate is that the participants do not research or prepare their cases in advance of the tournament. The Resolution (statement to be debated at a tournament) is accompanied by several pages of resource material and is given to the debaters approximately one hour before the first round of competition. During that time, the debaters prepare their cases for both the Affirmative (supporting the Resolution) and Negative (opposing the Resolution) because they will debate each case in alternating rounds during the tournament. Each team is composed of a pair of students (typically from the same school) who share the responsibilities of debating against an opposing team. A Judge decides and scores each match.

Extemporaneous Debate Structure: For each match, each team (Affirmative and Negative) designates which of its two students will be its 1st position speaker and which will be its 2nd. This must remain constant throughout that match. Each speaker will present two speeches, one during the Constructive period and one during the Rebuttal period. Each speaker will be cross examined by the opposing team at the end of his or her constructive speech. Each team is allotted an equal amount of preparation time.

Order of Each Match	
Speech	Duration
1 st Affirmative Constructive	6 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
1 st Negative Constructive	6 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
2 nd Affirmative Constructive	6 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
2 nd Negative Constructive	6 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
1 st Negative Rebuttal	4 minutes
1 st Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
2 nd Negative Rebuttal	4 minutes
2 nd Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Affirmative Prep Time	6 minutes
Negative Prep Time	6 minutes
TOTAL	64 minutes

Monitoring Time: Judges are responsible for monitoring the elapsing of time during speeches and displaying silent hand signals during the final minutes of each speech. They must also monitor time for cross examination periods and each team's prep time use.

Prep Time: Each team receives a maximum of six minutes of preparation time per match, which they may take in multiples of one minute. Preparation time may be taken by a team only just prior to one of its Constructive or Rebuttal speeches. A team must request prep time from the judge. The team's next appointed speaker must rise with appropriate promptness when their prep time has expired.

Constructive Speeches: Lines of reasoning must be presented during the Constructive phase of the debate.

1st Affirmative Constructive Speech: The speaker has the prerogative to define terms contained within the Resolution. The definitions must be reasonable in content and in scope. The speaker needs to present each of his/her team's Contentions (numbered statements of argumentation) in a clear manner. There are usually three contentions for each case, but there is no required number. The speaker should develop the reasoning which supports each of the team's contentions.

1st Negative Constructive Speech: The speaker needs to present each of his/her team's Contentions (numbered statements of argumentation) in a clear manner. The speaker should present and develops the reasoning which supports each of their team's Contentions In addition, this speaker should begin to oppose the other team's Contentions and supporting arguments (clash). Further, this speaker has the prerogative to define any terms contained in the Resolution that the 1st Affirmative speaker did not define. The speaker may contest any definitions presented by the 1st Affirmative speaker if he or she believes them to be unreasonable.

2nd Affirmative Constructive: The speaker has two jobs: present clear opposing arguments and reasoning against the Negative team's case and further support and defend its own case.

2nd Negative Constructive: The speaker has two jobs: present clear opposing arguments and reasoning against the Affirmative team's case and further support and defend its own case.

Cross Examinations: Immediately after each Constructive speech, the speaker who has just presented remains at the podium and states, "I am now open for cross-ex." The opposing team then has three minutes (timed by the judge) to ask questions of that speaker. The speaker at the podium may not receive any help from his or her partner. The opposing team may ask the speaker for clarification of points that they may have found confusing or repetition of the exact wording of any/all of that speaker's contentions and definitions. The team posing questions may also ask questions intended to elicit responses that could be used against the opponent's case. For such points to be truly effective, however, the questioners need to address the points in their subsequent speeches.

Speakers are expected to answer reasonable questions to the best of their ability. They may also ask for repetition or clarification of questions or respond that they do not know an answer to a question They may decline to answer inappropriate questions.

Within reason, questioners may interrupt a speaker's response stating "Thank you, you have answered my question" or the like. It may be important for them to do so to prevent the speaker from using up cross-ex time to pitch their own case or to run out the clock. Students may be emphatic during cross-ex, but not rude.

Cross examination is to be used to ask and respond to questions; it should not be used to introduce an argument or to present evidence.

Rebuttal Speeches: The order of the speeches changes so that the affirmative team has the last word in the debate.

- 1st Negative Rebuttal (4 minutes). The speaker has three jobs: reaffirm their team's contentions, respond to arguments against those contentions by the opposing team, and press their attack on the opposing team's contentions. The 1st Negative will also want to respond to points made during the Cross Ex of the 2nd Negative.

NOTE: The two negative speakers will want to coordinate the 2nd Negative Constructive and 1st Negative Rebuttal carefully. No new arguments may be introduced in rebuttal, so the 2nd Negative should make sure to introduce new arguments in the constructive. Replies to earlier Affirmative arguments should be shifted into the 1st Negative Rebuttal.

- 1st Affirmative Rebuttal (4 minutes): One of the hardest speeches in the debate, the 1st Affirmative must respond to both preceding Negative speakers. This speaker has three jobs: reaffirm their own team's contentions, respond to arguments against those contentions by the opposing team, and press their attack on the opposing team's contentions. The 1st Affirmative has to leave the way clear for the 2nd Affirmative to summarize the debate by answering all significant Negative arguments.
- 2nd Negative Rebuttal (4 minutes): The primary purpose of the final Negative speech is to summarize the debate in a way that convinces the judge to vote for the Negative team. Secondary tasks include: reaffirm their team's contentions, respond to arguments against those contentions by the opposing team, and press their attack on the opposing team's contentions.
- 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (4 minutes): The primary purpose of the final Affirmative speech is to summarize the debate in a way that convinces the judge to vote for the Affirmative team. Secondary tasks include: reaffirm their team's contentions, respond to arguments against those contentions by the opposing team, and press their attack on the opposing team's contentions.

New Points: No new lines of argument may be presented during rebuttals; speakers may, however, support arguments and lines of reasoning already presented. They may do so with new examples or illustrations as long as the underlying argument is not new.

Fundamental Principles of Debating the Extemporaneous Form

Organization: Present your arguments in an orderly, logical way that can be followed.

“Signpost” your arguments. A speaker should make clear links between his or her argumentation and the contentions or arguments being addressed. Preface your arguments with a brief remark signaling what a given argument links to. For example: “In our 1st contention we state...” or “In response to our opponent’s attack on our 3rd contention...”. Signposting goes a long way in making your case organization and your reasoning clear to the judge

Contentions: In forming contentions, brevity is your ally. Strive for clear, concise wording which strengthens your case, crisply articulates your arguments to the judge and gives your opponents less to attack.

A good contention should always answer the question “why” for the affirmative case or “why not” for the negative in direct response to the resolution

It is generally agreed that three contentions is a good number but this is not a requirement. Too few, however, and your case may be weak, too many and time constraints may make it difficult to defend all of your points.

Arguments: Support your case with sound reasoning. Clash effectively with your opponent’s arguments. Each team has the obligation to clash with the arguments presented by the other team. By “clash” we mean each team must respond to the other’s arguments specifically and in detail

A good debate does not sound like each team is arguing in a vacuum. A good debater listens to his opponents and responds directly to the arguments his opponents make. It is a legitimate practice for one team to point out that its opponent has not replied to certain arguments that the team has made if this is the case. The Judge may consider such arguments as counting against the team that has ignored or dropped them, assuming they are of substance.

Cross Examination: Questioners: Ask for restatement or clarification of contentions and definitions if needed. Strive to draw out useful information and utilize it in a subsequent speech.

Defending Speakers: Answer reasonable questions to the best of your ability. Ask for restatement or clarification of any questions that you find confusing. Strive to effectively defend your case.

Persuasiveness: Speak with conviction and strive to present compelling reasoning. Contentions may each stand alone, or may support each other in a comprehensive argument. The arguments may rely on any commonly accepted modes of persuasion, such as logic, examples, evidence, scientific theory, practicality, benefit and harm, morality, and so forth

Presentation: During your speeches, address only the judge, not your opponents. Sustain eye contact with the judge and speak with conviction. Use your speaking time effectively; try to use all of the time allotted to you without being overly repetitive.

Civility: Be polite and respectful. You may be emphatic but not rude.

Fundamental Principles of Judging Extemporaneous Debate

Before the Round:

Preparation: First, be sure that you have a stopwatch, ballot & flowchart. These are all available in the TAB room. Fill out the information indicated on the ballot form (See directions at top of ballot).

During the Round:

Taking Notes: Take careful notes on the Flowchart document. Effective note-taking is one of your most important tools in judging the rounds. Use one column per speech. Write down each team's contentions. You can follow the clash of arguments through the debate and note when contentions are dropped by the opposing team or abandoned. Using a different color of ink for each team can sometimes help to track flow more easily.

Timekeeping: The judge is responsible for timekeeping. Use silent hand signals for the speeches, forewarning students that their time is running short: two fingers for two minutes left, one finger for one minute left, one hand forming a "C" for 30 seconds left. Announce when time is up. The speaker may finish his or her sentence. Hand signals are not needed for cross examination or prep time periods. The judge should simply announce in a clear but firm voice that time is out. Cross ex must cease immediately, even in the midst of oration. With prep time, additional minutes may be called for by debaters provided that they have prep time remaining.

After the Round:

Non Disclosure: After the final speech, ask the students to vacate the room so that you can mark the ballot in privacy. Results are strictly confidential and must not be disclosed until the trophies are awarded at the end of the tournament. Do not give copies of your personal notes, ballot or flowcharts to the debaters.

Ballot and Rubric Form: Using your flowchart notes, first decide which team won. Ties are not permitted. This is the key decision—ranks and scores follow from it. Then, following the directions on the ballot and rubric form, fill out both sides. Rank the speakers from 1st through 4th place. *Individual Speakers cannot be tied in rank!* Use the rubric to rate the speakers' performances. Total each speaker's points. Point totals must reflect the ranks appropriately. The winning team must have the highest total number of speaker points—no ties.

Ballot Return: Turn in your ballot/rubric to the TAB room immediately after filling it out, BEFORE you go to the next round

Promptness: Please remember that we are trying to keep the tournament on schedule. Late return of ballots slows down the tournament and causes everyone to leave late.

Questions and Concerns: Questions and concerns should always be brought to the attention of the Executive Director, Assistant Director, or their designated representative, who can usually be found in the TAB room.

Organization: Debaters should present arguments in an orderly, logical way that can be easily followed. Speakers should make clear links between his or her argumentation and the contentions or arguments being addressed.

Contentions: Debaters should present clear, concise and logical contentions, which should be supported by sound reasoning. A good contention should always answer the question “why” for the affirmative case or “why not” for the negative in direct response to the resolution. It is generally agreed that three contentions is a good number, but this is not a requirement. Too few, however and the case may be weak, too many and time constraints may make it difficult to defend all of the points presented.

Arguments: Debaters should support their cases with sound reasoning. Each team has the obligation to clash with the arguments presented by the other team. By “clash” we mean each team must respond to the other’s arguments specifically and in detail. Debaters should point out flaws in their opponents’ arguments and explain how the arguments are misdirected, incorrect or incomplete. Teams may begin to clash at the earliest opportunity, as early as the First Negative Constructive Speech, and should continue through the rebuttals. During the course of the debate, speakers should extend arguments rather than simply repeating what has been previously said.

A good debate does not sound like each team is arguing in a vacuum. A good debater listens to his or her opponents and responds directly to the arguments the opponents make. It is a legitimate practice for one team to point out that its opponent has not replied to certain arguments that the team has made if that is the case. The judge may consider such arguments as counting against the team that has ignored or dropped them, assuming they are of substance.

Cross Examination: Questioners may ask for restatement or clarification of contentions and definitions if needed. They should strive to draw out useful information and utilize it in a subsequent speech. Defending speakers should answer reasonable questions to the best of their ability. They may ask for restatement or clarification of any questions that they find confusing. They should strive to effectively defend their case.

Persuasiveness: Debaters should speak with conviction and strive to present compelling reasoning. Contentions may each stand alone, or may support each other in a comprehensive argument. The arguments may rely on any commonly accepted modes of persuasion, such as logic, examples, evidence, scientific theory, practicality, benefit and harm, morality, and so forth

Presentation: A debater’s speeches should be well structured and well delivered. Speakers should be engaged, enthusiastic and make eye contact. Speakers should use proper diction and grammar, and speak at an appropriate volume. Debaters should use their speaking time effectively, using all of the time allotted to them without being overly repetitive.

Civility: Debaters should be polite and respectful. They may be emphatic but not rude. The Judge should caution any debater who, in the opinion of the Judge, is not behaving properly. In the case of flagrant misbehavior, the Judge may terminate the debate and direct the loss to the offending team.

Judges should also note that debate is a contest, and debaters can become quite excited. The Judge should not discourage the enthusiasm and passion that is a normal component.

Tips for Effective Judging:

- 1 Avoid bias. Your personal opinions on the resolution being debated must not enter into your decision.
- 2 Debaters can't be expected to know what you know, so don't hold them to that standard.
- 3 Judge the debate on what is presented by the debaters
- 4 Unless debaters are unacceptably rude or behave inappropriately, don't interrupt the debate.
- 5 Terms should be defined at the beginning of the debate.
 - AFFIRMATIVE has the right to present reasonable definitions.
 - NEGATIVE may define terms not defined by AFFIRMATIVE and may also dispute unreasonable definitions.
- 6 New arguments may only be raised in the CONSTRUCTIVE speeches.
- 7 During REBUTTAL speeches, a team may support existing arguments with new illustrations and examples as long as the underlying reasoning is not new.
- 8 A "dropped" point is an argument or contention that is ignored by the opposing team. This weighs against the scoring of the team that dropped it.
- 9 Points made during cross-ex should be included in a subsequent speech for those points to be judged in favor of the team.
- 10 Please be sure to write legibly so that debaters can read your comments
11. Student's attire is not to be considered when judging the round.

Important CDA Policies

Supervision of Students

To attend any tournament, students must be accompanied by an adult who possesses their emergency contact information and agrees to be responsible for supervising all students in their charge.

Providing Judges

All participating schools must bring adult volunteers to serve as judges as follows: 1 initial judge to meet CDA staffing needs, plus one for every set of 1-4 debaters. Therefore, 1-4 debaters = 2 judges, 5-8 = 3 judges, 9-12 = 4 judges and so on. The initial judge may be waived for schools that are hosting tournaments or providing full-time CDA staff volunteers. Coaches should have their prospective judges read the judges' training information prior to the tournament date. In addition, CDA will hold a Judges Training Workshop at each tournament, prior to the beginning of competition.

Policy Regarding Ethics in Argumentation and Evidence

Debaters are expected to be truthful and honest with respect to the arguments they make and the evidence or examples they cite. Debaters should not lie or fabricate evidence or examples or use evidence or examples that they know to be untrue. Judges should note that extemporaneous debate does not give debaters much time for research, and should not penalize honest mistakes. However, blatant or flagrant dishonesty may be penalized in judging a round. The Executive Director may expel students who repeatedly violate these standards

Any further disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the Executive Director alone.

Policy Regarding Rudeness

Debaters are expected to be polite and respectful to each other and the judge at all times. Shouting, bullying, harassment, threats, violence, name calling, insults, unbecoming language or any similar behavior is never appropriate at any time during the debate. Debaters may be emphatic but not rude. A Judge may caution debaters, who, in the opinion of the Judge, overstep the bounds of acceptable behavior. The appropriate penalty for rude behavior is a reduction in speaker points and a corresponding reduction in ranks on the ballot, or, in extreme cases, directed loss. A Judge may, in the face of flagrant misbehavior, end the debate and declare a directed loss against the offending team. Incidents of rudeness should be reported to the Executive Director.

Any further disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the Executive Director alone.

Policy Regarding Student Attire

For all CDA events, students are expected to uphold their school's dress code standards. If a judge feels that a student's attire is inappropriate, they should bring it to the attention of the Executive Director or Assistant Director. Student's attire is not to be considered in judging the rounds.

Policy Regarding Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices at CDA tournaments by attendees is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to laptop computers, cell phones, PDAs, palmtop computers or any other electronic device that could be used for the collection, preparation and/or storage of data. Anyone wishing to use a cell phone or any other electronic device must come to the TAB room and secure the permission of the Executive Director or Assistant Director and must do so in their presence. This rule exists to keep the competition as fair as possible with no student, school or team having an unfair advantage over any other.

Policy Regarding Hardcopy Resources

The use of hardcopy resources (newspapers, magazines, books, written material or printed material of any kind) is strictly prohibited with the following exceptions:

- The Resolution packet for that tournament
- A dictionary
- A copy of the U.S. Constitution, including preamble and amendments
- A copy of a standard, single-volume almanac
- Notes written during that day's tournament

Anyone wishing to use any other hardcopy resources must come to the TAB room and secure the permission of the Executive Director or Assistant Director and must do so in their presence. This rule exists to keep the competition as fair as possible with no student, school or team having an unfair advantage over any other.

Varsity and Novice Eligibility

CDA tournaments typically have both a varsity and a novice division to permit students to face competition matched to their ability, experience and confidence. The criteria for determining in which division a student is eligible to participate are as follows:

- A student may initially begin debating as either novice or varsity. A student may move up to the varsity division at any time, but must remain there once they have done so.
- *Seniors may not debate in the novice division. (Added 9/10)*
- A student may participate in the novice division for their first academic year (in whole or in part) of debate.
- If a novice division student wins a trophy during his/her first academic year, that student must move up to the varsity division at the beginning of the next academic year and remain there.

- A novice division student who does not win a trophy in any tournament during his/her first academic year of debating may begin his/her second year of debate at the novice level, however once that student wins a trophy, he/she must immediately move up to the varsity division and remain there.
- A student who has debated at the novice level for two academic years (or any part of two academic years) must move to the varsity division commencing his/her third year and remain there.
- Once a student has moved to the varsity level, that student may not return to the novice level.
- When circumstances require pairing a novice with a varsity debater, the team must compete in the varsity division. For such an expedient pairing, the novice student will not be required to remain in the varsity division permanently, however any given novice student may not be paired with a varsity partner more than once in an academic year.
- Coaches should strongly consider placing Juniors and Seniors just starting debate into the varsity division.
- *A Junior debating novice who wins a trophy must move up to the varsity at their next tournament.* (added. 9/09)
- *Juniors in their second year of debate must debate varsity.* (added. 9/09)

The CDA expects each coach to comply with these criteria and be responsible in assigning their students appropriately. However, the CDA Executive Director or Assistant Director may reassign students to a different division if, in their opinion a student has been inappropriately placed. Further, the Executive Director and Assistant Director may disqualify from competition students who are registered for a tournament in the wrong division

Eligibility for State Finals

The last scheduled tournament of the year is the State Final tournament and is open only to those debaters who have qualified during the year. Students qualify separately for Novice and Varsity divisions in the State Finals according to the following criteria:

- A student who receives a trophy at any regular tournament, either as an individual speaker or as a member of a team, is eligible for the State Finals.
- A student who as a member of a team compiles an undefeated record through the qualifying rounds of any regular tournament is eligible for the State Finals.
- If a student qualifies for State Finals at the Novice level based on their performance at any regular tournament and that student then moves up to the Varsity level for the remainder of the regular tournaments, then that student must compete at the Varsity level at State Finals.
- *A student that did not qualify for State Finals their first year of debate as a novice, may still qualify for State Finals as a novice in their second year of debate, except as noted in the next point.* (added 9/09)
- *Juniors and Seniors may not qualify for State Finals debating in the Novice division.* (added 9/09)
- If a school has an odd number of students who have qualified for State Finals at either the Novice or Varsity levels, then that school may send one extra student at either (or both) levels as needed to make up a full team.

- A school may not send an unpaired student to State Finals, that is, the State Finals will not accommodate pairing qualifying but unpaired students from different schools to compete as a mixed team.