

The Final Round¹

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Stamford High School

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Resolved: The United States should boycott the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

A Note about the Notes

I've reproduced my flow chart for the final round at Stamford High School augmented by what I remember from the debate. The notes are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. Others may have slightly different versions. I'm sure the debaters will read them and exclaim, "That's not what I said!" I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight that what a judge hears may not be what they say or wish they had said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was actually presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention "flowed" across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It's close to the way I actually take notes during the debate.

The Final Round

The final round at Stamford was between AITE (Michael Weinberger and Alexis Garkusha) on the Affirmative and Glastonbury (Scott Garosshen and Ian Hoskins) on the Negative. The debate was won by Glastonbury on the Negative.

1) First Affirmative Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the Resolution
- c) A1²: It is immoral to condone human rights violations, and participation in the Olympics would condone Chinese human rights violations
 - i) It is immoral to kill innocents
 - ii) China has a record of imprisoning and killing political dissidents
 - iii) Journalists have been jailed and blogs suppressed
 - iv) Participation in the Olympics condones these activities

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² "A1" indicates the Affirmative first contentions, "N2" the Negative second contention and so forth.

- (1) It's like eating in a restaurant that employs slaves
- d) A2: A boycott would pressure the Chinese government to change
 - i) China will feel economic pressure from lost revenues and tourism
 - ii) Chinese people will see a clear message from the American people
- e) A3: A boycott will draw media attention to Chinese actions
 - i) If we go to the Olympics, reporters will focus on athletics
 - ii) If there is a boycott, reporters will focus on the issues
 - iii) If the US boycotts, other countries will assume there are important issues, and they will send reporters
- f) Summarize A1, A2, A3
- 2) Cross-Ex of First Affirmative**
 - a) It seem likely China will perceive a boycott as a threat. Can you give me any examples of a similar action causing China to change? No, but this action is different.
 - b) Which do you think was more important, the IOC³ selection or US participation? The IOC choice was important, but our participation is important too.
 - c) Which is more important? US participation
 - d) Which is more important to China? US participation
 - e) You say that if the US acts it will cause others to follow. Is that what happened in Iraq? A boycott would be different. We did not have the same economic ties with Iraq. Iraq was our enemy and we are still friendly with China.
 - f) Weren't there human rights violations in both cases that we were trying to draw attention too? In Iraq we were going after a dictator.
 - g) Can you give examples of how a boycott would affect China? I'm not sure how it will affect China, but I'm sure it will
- 3) First Negative Constructive**
 - a) Introduction
 - b) Resolution
 - c) N1: Boycotts historically have been ineffective and often harmful
 - i) The 1980 US boycott of the Moscow Olympics had no effect on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which they left 9 years later
 - ii) The Soviet boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 did nothing at all
 - iii) DPRK⁴ has grown increasingly hostile as a result of our boycott, with no change in policy
 - iv) Further, a boycott will punish the athletes
 - (1) Athletes have a short competitive lifespan
 - v) There are better ways than a boycott
 - (1) Athlete Joey Cheek's donation to Darfur shows a a more productive approach
 - (2) US supremacy demonstrated on the field will present an example to the Chinese people
 - (3) Participation in the games will do a better job of changing Chinese policy

³ IOC, International Olympic Committee.

⁴ DPRK, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, better known as North Korea. The Negative used the initials in the debate with no explanation. Generally, if you are going to use an uncommon abbreviation, you should define it the first time you use it in the debate.

- d) N2: A boycott removes any incentive the Chinese have to improve
 - i) The Chinese have been improving conditions in anticipation of the games: sanitation, air, living conditions
 - ii) No reason to continue these improvements if we don't show up
- e) N3: A boycott will damage our foreign relations with China
 - i) China helps finance the war in Iraq
 - ii) China holds \$7 trillion of US debt, and is our second largest trade partner
 - iii) Therefore China can squeeze us if we boycott the Olympics.
 - iv) If we alienate them, they will do the exact opposite of what we want.

4) Cross-Ex of First Negative

- a) Can you give an example of a boycott alienating a country? DPRK
- b) You said that the boycott would delegitimize the Olympics? Yes, the top team would not be there.
- c) Doesn't that imply that a boycott would produce a world-wide reaction? No, it would just harm the Olympics, and the rest of the world would likely attend.
- d) You don't think a US boycott would cause countries to question why we boycotted and whether they should too? We lost international support on Operation Iraqi Freedom, we would here too.
- e) Didn't the USSR have economic ties with the US in 1980? Not to the extent China does today. We can't afford to antagonize them.

5) Second Affirmative Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Resolution
- c) N1:
 - i) 1980 & 1984 are not like 2008
 - (1) The US and USSR were both economically self-sufficient
 - (2) The US and China are economically tied
 - ii) Iraq is not a good comparison either—it was a military invasion
 - iii) A boycott sends a message that we won't condone human rights violations
- d) N2: trade produces development
 - i) If we attend the Olympics, China will see that it can continue to suppress dissidents.
- e) N3: the negative says that the US should be afraid of China's power
 - i) But the economic ties prevent a backlash from China, as they would be hurt as well
- f) A1: attendance at the Olympics will be seen as silent consent to human rights violations
 - i) An Olympic boycott would be symbolic and effective
 - ii) While an economic boycott would be seen as too much and too damaging
- g) A2: the boycott will pressure China by sending a clear message to the world
- h) A3: the boycott will change the tone of news reports around the Olympics
 - i) If we attend, it will only be news about the Olympics
 - ii) If we boycott, it will be news on why we chose to boycott

6) Cross-Ex of Second Affirmative

- a) The US doesn't condone human rights violations? Yes

- b) Why is condemnation and participation at the Games mutually exclusive? It sends a clear message either way
- c) What specific improvements in human rights practices will a boycott cause? The Chinese people will wonder why we aren't there
- d) Why will they listen now, when they haven't in the past? The Olympics are very important to the Chinese
- e) Extremely important? Not entirely, but important
- f) Why not use economic sanctions? That is a measure too far, and it is too soon to apply it.
- g) But the Chinese will be upset if we boycott the Olympics? Yes, but there will be no backlash economically.

7) Second Negative Constructive

- a) N1:
 - i) We have given examples showing specifically that Olympic boycotts are ineffective
 - (1) The Soviets did not withdraw from Afghanistan
 - (2) The US did not take any action against the Soviets for 1984
 - ii) A boycott will harm the Chinese people, not the Chinese government
 - (1) Lower investment will harm them economically
 - iii) We can participate in the Olympics and still condemn human rights violations
- b) N2: there have already been improvements in Beijing due to the Olympics:
 - urban renewal, improvement in air quality
 - i) The Affirmative has said trade promotes development
- c) N3: Relations with China are already tenuous
 - i) China is a top economic partner
 - ii) A boycott removes US influence from China\
 - iii) We should seek to participate in China
 - (1) No change if we don't talk to them
 - (2) We will have no credibility to discuss issues
 - (3) China doesn't respond to "messages"
- d) A1: Participation in the Olympics does not mean we condone human rights violations.
 - i) We can participate and still pursue improved human rights in other ways
- e) A2: The boycott may pressure the Chinese people, but it will have no effect on the government
- f) A3: There will be more reporters and TV cameras if we participate than if we don't
 - i) It's unlikely that those reporters will ignore news not associated with the Olympics

8) Cross-Ex of Second Negative

- a) Did we say we would cut ties with China? That is the implication of a boycott, and it provides a precedent for further cuts
- b) Did we say we would cut off communications? A boycott is a cut off of communications
- c) Have the Chinese police cracked down for the Olympic games? There are human rights violations

- d) Have these increased? We don't know.
- e) What will the media focus on at the Olympic games? The entirety of China
- f) What to they report on at the Olympics? There will be competition among them to bring up human rights violations

9) First Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) N1: 1980 and 1984 are different because the US and USSR had no significant economic ties
 - i) Our economic ties with China will cause them to listen if we boycott 2008
- b) N2: Chinese human rights violations have been increasing since the 2001 IOC decision
 - i) They have cleaned up the streets by violating human rights
 - ii) A boycott will highlight this
- c) N3: The Affirmative never said that we would remove any economic ties with China
- d) A1: Participation means we condone China's actions. The linkage is clear
- e) A2: The economic ties involved mean a boycott will reduce funds available to the Chinese government, putting pressure on them
- f) A3: A boycott will certainly bring media attention to Chinese actions.

10) First Negative Rebuttal

- a) A1:
 - i) The Olympics are an international event, not a Chinese event
 - ii) Participating draws attention away from China
 - iii) The Chinese want an Olympics unfettered by protests
 - iv) The protestors want to appear on camera
 - (1) US participation permits this
 - (2) The Olympics could showcase human rights violations
 - v) A boycott supports human rights violations by harming Chinese people
 - vi) More will see what goes on if we attend the Olympics
- b) N1: A boycott will harm Chinese peasants

11) Second Negative Rebuttal

- a) A1: Participation permits condemnation and discussion of human rights violations
 - i) How is the Affirmative "message" different from those China has ignored in the past
- b) A2: A boycott will not pressure China
 - i) It won't hurt the elite
 - ii) It will devastate the peasants
- c) A3: A boycott removes reasons for cameras to be in China
 - i) Reporters will highlight everything that happens
- d) N1: 1980 and 1984 are very relevant, and show a boycott has no effect
- e) We can condemn human rights violations and still participate in the Olympics

12) Second Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) The Negative case is full of misconceptions and wrong arguments
- b) They say the Olympics are international—a boycott would draw away its glory
- c) They seem to think tourists will come to protest—we are not calling for civil protests but for a boycott

- d) They say a boycott will cut off communications with China—we never said we would cut ties with China. The boycott is intended to send a message
- e) They say messages have been sent before—we need to continue to try, and a boycott gives us a chance to help
- f) They say the media won't respond—we believe that the media will ask why there is a boycott
- g) They say the boycott will hurt the lower class—it will do the complete opposite, since all of the Olympic money is being spent in the industrial centers.