

The American Legion Department of Washington
National High School Oratorical Contest
Judges Instructions
(All Contests)

Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and success of the Oratorical Contest program, which results in the selection of a National Champion. You may, or may not, agree with a contestant's presented viewpoint; we ask that you try not to let that affect your judgement of the relevant criteria.

Each contest shall have judges who shall reach a combined decision, with each judge having equal involvement in determining contest placing. Judges will be seated in different locations (areas) in the contest room and each judge shall render his/her decision **without consultation with other judges or individuals**.

The contest is conducted in two phases. The contestants will all appear the first time to present their **prepared orations** and then appear a second time for their **assigned topic discourse**. This allows the judges an opportunity to re-evaluate and reconsider "first impressions" and compare each speaker against all other speakers.

Judges should carefully study and possess a thorough understanding of the scorecard and scoring system. This is to include all areas under, and including (A) **Content**, and (B) **Speaking Skills**, on the scorecard. A judge having any questions concerning the scoring system should consult with the contest briefer prior to the contest.

As a guideline, judges are encouraged to award their top choice (speaker) **approximately 90 points** with all others proportionally lower. This is particularly important should a tie exist in the record-of-choice totals.

Lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic on the **attendant duties and obligations of a citizen** must result in the judges downgrading the contestant involved. **Judges may downgrade a contestant up to a total of ten points for failure to speak on the Constitution of the United States.** The individual conducting the contest will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

The judges when directed by the contest Moderator shall proceed to the tabulation room for final review of the scorecards and the tabulation process.

Pencils with erasers will be provided and should be used to make the initial entries on the scorecards. Following the conclusion of the contest and ensuring the math is correct, the pencil entries should be covered in ink.

Each judge shall insert the total number of points credited to the contestant and also insert in the **record-of-choice** column, his/her choice of placement for each contestant in accordance with the highest total point scores. If a tie exists in the total point scores on a judge's scorecard, **the judge must make adjustments** in his/her scoring of the tied contestants so that **no two contestants have the same total point score**. This will enable the judge to **rank one contestant above the other in the record-of-choice column**.

Judges shall refrain from discussing any phase of the contest or their judging methods with contestants, coaches, or others, except the contest moderator, following the contest. Moderators and tabulators are not permitted to divulge the judge's scorecard at the site of the contest.

Persons interested in the scoring for professional reasons may, upon written request, be mailed at a later date, copies of the scores with the names of the judges omitted.