



## Public Forum Pilot Rules 2019-2020

In 2018, the NSDA Board of Directors created a Public Forum Ad Hoc Committee of coaches and former PF competitors to assess the event and determine whether it meets a competitive pedagogical need and the strategic goals of the organization. The committee used community feedback to suggest potential changes while maintaining the integrity of the event. These potential changes were shared at the 2018 National Conference, with coaches and students at summer institutions, through *Rostrum* articles, with coaches at the NDCA, and on an open forum through the NSDA website for all coaches to share feedback. After close to a year of gathering community input, the committee presented recommendations to the NSDA Board of Directors at their Spring 2019 meeting. Below are the recommendations that received a majority vote by the Board of Directors along with a short explanation of the rationale for their adoption.

**1) Pilot new speech times that add one minute to each summary speech and add one minute to each team's preparation time. These piloted speech times will be used at all NSDA district tournaments in 2019-2020 and at the 2020 National Tournament.**

Community response to the addition of time to prep and summary speeches was overwhelmingly positive. The purpose of extending summary speech time is to open up the debate for more substantive responses to issues that arise in rebuttals. A longer summary speech will also differentiate the summary from the final focus and allow students to balance both developed responses and crystallization. Expansion of prep time to 3 minutes each will allow teams to better prepare in-round for more in-depth argumentation, as well as push debaters to resolve evidence disputes more efficiently during speech time. These speech times will be evaluated by the Board of Directors in 2020. View the new speech times on page 24 of the *Unified Manual*.

First Speaker - Team A	4 minutes
First Speaker - Team B	4 minutes
Crossfire	3 minutes
Second Speaker - Team A	4 minutes
Second Speaker - Team B	4 minutes
Crossfire	3 minutes
Summary - First Speaker - Team A	3 minutes
Summary - First Speaker - Team B	3 minutes
Grand Crossfire	3 minutes
Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team A	2 minutes
Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team B	2 minutes
Prep time	3 minutes per team



**2) Add language to the *Unified Manual* that clarifies the structure of Grand Crossfire.**

Because there was a fair amount of community pushback on the idea of eliminating Grand Crossfire, the committee proposed additional language to help assuage concerns that Grand Crossfire leads to interruptions and failure to effectively advance substance of the debate. This language encourages a more structured approach of alternating questions and explicitly asks that debaters remain respectful during the questioning period. View the new language on page 24 of the *Unified Manual*.

**3) Clarify language about paraphrasing in the *Unified Manual* evidence rules for debate.**

The committee considered several different approaches to addressing community concerns that paraphrasing of evidence has led some teams to misrepresent evidence and create inefficiency in evidence exchange. Many coaches argued for eliminating paraphrasing completely, while others believe that the opportunity to paraphrase makes PF accessible and that eliminating it will not stop evidence misrepresentation. The new language forces teams to point to specific lines from the original source from which the paraphrased argument is pulled, in contrast to the old language that would allow a team to point to an entire book or article as their original source. This is to give the other team a true opportunity to evaluate the evidence or argument. View the new language on page 29 of the *Unified Manual*.

**4) Continue using two-month topics in September/October and November/December with one-month topics the remainder of the year.**

A two-month long November/December topic was tested in 2018 and received positive feedback. The purpose of having two topics that last two months is to allow younger debaters develop their understanding of the topics being debated and explore more of the depth of the topics while honing their debating skills. There were also few tournaments that used the one-month December topic because of holidays; many opted to use the January topic instead.

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