PLANNING AND CONDUCTING CLUB CONTESTS

Area directors oversee area speech contests, and division directors oversee division speech contests. When area and division directors have a good understanding of the contest process, rules, and resources, the contests’ quality is enhanced. The roles that area and division directors play in speech contests vary by district. In this session, area and division directors learn how to find answers about contests using the *Speech Contest Rulebook* (Item 1171) and discover other resources so that they are equipped to oversee speech contests in their areas and divisions.

**Overview**

In this session, the following topics are presented:

Types and benefits of speech contests

Speech contest preparation

Speech contest rules

**Objectives**

After completing this session, area and division directors will be able to do the following:

State the types of speech contests officially recognized by Toastmasters International

Explain how speech contests benefit contestants, the audience, and those who help conduct the contests

Prepare a speech contest with their clubs

Solve speech contest challenges and answer questions using the *Speech Contest Rulebook* (Item 1171)

**Materials**

PowerPoint presentation

One *Speech Contest Rulebook* (Item 1171) per area and division director

**Duration**

One hour

**Planning and Conducting Club Contests**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. SHOW Planning and Conducting Club Contest (1 minute)
   1. Speech contests are an important part of the Toastmasters educational program. They provide an opportunity for Toastmasters to gain speaking experience, as well as an opportunity for other Toastmasters to learn by observing proficient speakers.
   2. There are two keys to putting on a good contest: preparation and communication. Preparation involves making sure you have the right people and the right materials. Communication involves ensuring that all those involved understand their roles and responsibilities. This presentation is to help you plan, organize and conduct a well-run contest. We will first discuss different aspects of planning for the event and then how to conduct the contest. The advice contained in this guide has been gleaned from the experience of conducting and attending numerous contests and observing what worked well and what didn’t.
2. SHOW the Session Agenda Slide (1 minute)
   1. Speech contests can be broken down into four parts. Each are essential to the overall success of the contests.
      1. The Team is important as they guide the validity of the contest. The members of the team must be knowledgeable, experienced, and want to participate in the contest. These attributes are key to an enjoyable contest. Who wants to be part of a contest, where no one seems to know the rules? This can cause confusion and frustration and lack of participation. Later in the briefing we will discuss the members of the team, their roles, and why they are an integral part of a contest’s success.
      2. No contest can be a success without rules and policies. It is imperative that all participants are very knowledgeable of the rules and their role in the contest. The Speech Contest Rulebook is the book use to verify these roles and responsibilities. Uniformity of all contests are based on how well clubs adhere to the rules in the Rulebook. Although we may be in a virtual environment, the foundation of the rules still remains the same.
      3. There is book sense and common sense. The rulebook is the book sense and best practices is the common senses. We will discuss these best practices and how they are important in a contest. Understanding what works and what hasn’t work can be the difference between winning and not winning.
      4. Contest day is the results of the collaboration of the previous three. After all preparation is completed, it is now contest day. The more prepared the participants are, the smoother the contest will be. We will discuss how this is important, and even the smallest detail can have a big impact on contest day.

***[INSTRUCTOR NOTES: The first two parts of this presentation primarily talks about contest and the process of conducting contest. For the most part it is the same as with “in person” contest with the exception of Zoom Facilitators, Breakout Rooms, and Video/lighting requirements. You can skim through the first half as it didn’t really change. The main changes come in explaining “Best Practices”.]***

**THE TEAM**

1. SHOW The Contest Team Slide (Planning) (1 minutes)
   1. Planning a contest takes more than just one person. Starting with the Contest Chairperson. This person is the Captain of the Contest. They have the overall responsibility of the contest and everyone participating. No captain can pilot a vessel alone. They need a crew to help guide, direct, and move the vessel.
   2. This crew is known as the Committee Members. They help the Contest Chairperson guide the direction of the contest. To help the team, the Chairperson should look to the Vice President – Education (VPE) for support. The VPE should find a volunteer to chair the committee and assist that chairperson in finding individuals that can bring specific skill sets to the team. To solicit the best members of the team, the VPE should consider a liaison with the Vice President – Public Relations (VPPR), who may be savvy with Social Media to help publicize the contest. Also work with the Vice President – Membership (VPM) to develop materials to provide to guests, such as a flyer (may be digital)/messaging with an invitation to your next club meeting. These members are key in the initial planning of any contest, so they must know their responsibilities and how to solicit the best qualified persons for the contest. The more knowledgeable they are, the better contest you will have.

[Ask Audience if they have used these people in club contest, and how they help them] (1 minutes)

1. SHOW The Contest Team Slide (Conducting) (3 minutes)
   1. Now that the planning is done, let’s talk about what is needed to conduct a successful contest. While, the contest chairperson works behind the scenes to ensure everyone else has what they need to be successful, there are several people that help in conducting a contest.
   2. The Chief Judge is responsible for verifying the eligibility of the judge staff, which consist of the judges, timers, and ballot counters. They must KNOW and adhere to the rulebook as mentioned earlier. The Chief Judge must have the ability to be impartial and not consider things such as a contestant’s audio or video quality when verifying the judge’s scores. They must appear unbiased in their overall judging requirements. The Chief Judge must be aware of any accommodations needed by anyone. The Chief Judge determines how ballots will be collected, recorded, and distributed. They also conduct the briefings for the judges, ballot counters and timers. In the event of a protest, the Chief Judge must have procedures in place to address all protests before contest result are announced.
   3. Judges play an important role in judging, not evaluating contestants. Judges are there to select winners. As a judge, they must know and adhere to the rulebook. There must be a minimum of five judges when judging a contest. When judging the contestant, they must remain unbiased, and do not consider a contestants video or audio quality when selecting a winner. They receive briefings from the Chief Judge on ballot scoring, and where and when to turn in their results.
   4. Ballot Counters have the role of receiving the ballots from the judges, tabulating the scores, and providing them to the Chief Judge. It is important to have at least two ballot counters to ensure the score totals are the same from both ballot counters. The chief Judge will determine how the ballot counters will receive the ballots. In a virtual world, it is not recommended that the ballots are received via the Chat Module of Zoom. This prevents the ballots from being sent to the wrong person(s). The Chief Judge will determine if the signed ballots will be received via text or email. This must be determined during the judges briefing.
   5. Timers, as in regular contest, are responsible for the timing of all speeches. To ensure this is conducted fairly, there must be at least two timers. Both timers must have stop watches to determine the accuracy of the time. In addition, the timer works with the Zoom Facilitator and Contestants to ensure they are pinned to the contestant. Being pinned allows the contestant to only see the timer when presenting their speech. This is crucial when there are many people at the virtual contest. The Timers also works with the contestant on visibility of the colors. This ensures the contestant sees the colors throughout their speech.
   6. The Contest Sergeant At Arms, meets, greets, and guides people throughout a contest. But, what is their role in a virtual contest? Although, they still have those responsibilities, in a virtual contest, a new position was created. It is called a Zoom Facilitator.
   7. Yes, the Zoom Facilitator has the responsibility of setting up the virtual meeting room, breakout rooms, audio/video setups, and polls. This new position is key in the virtual world. Later in the training, we will break down these responsibilities and further explain their role in a contest.
   8. Whether the judge, ballot counters or timers, it is imperative that all members of the judge committee know the Speech Contest Rulebook. In addition, everyone should work with the Zoom Facilitator and understand the use of breakout rooms, audio, visual, and basic video setup.

[Questions about the Contest Team] (2 minutes)

**RULES & POLICIES**

1. SHOW Rule, Rules, We Got To Have Rules (1 minute)
   1. The rulebook is lengthy and contains an abundance of information that most of us have used during the planning or conducting of contests in the past. Some of you probably have had to read and re-read many times in order to sort out all the nuances. Please, I cannot stress this enough, know what is in the rule book. As a participant of the contest, please know the rulebook. This will go a long way in reducing confusion and frustrations.
2. SHOW General Rules (1 minute)
   1. We will now discuss a few of the general rules of a contest. The general rules of a contest are spelled out in the Rule book on Pages 5 through 16.
      1. Eligibility
         1. A paid member of a club in the Area, Division, and District in which he or she is competing
         2. The club must be in good standing
         3. To be eligible for the International Speech contest, the member must also have completed six speeches in the Competent Communication manual or earned certificate of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience
         4. Member is ineligible to compete in any Toastmasters speech contest if the member is a voting judge beyond the club level in a contest type in which the member is still competing or intends to compete
         5. Members are ineligible to compete if they are presenter of education sessions, contest chair, contest Toastmaster, chief judges, and event committee chairs for the event at which the contest is being held
         6. Judge Committee members may not compete in contest in which they are serving a role
      2. Speech subject and preparation
         1. Contestants must create their own speeches, and each must be substantially original
         2. Twenty-five percent or less of the speech may be devoted to quoting, paraphrasing, or referencing another person’s content. Any quoted, paraphrased, or referenced content must be identified during the speech presentation.
         3. Before all contest, every contestant must certify in writing to the chief judge that the content of their speech is or will be substantially original by using the Speaker’s Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Item 1183)
         4. Contestants must not reference another contestant, or a speech presented by another contestant, from the platform at the same contest in which they are competing
      3. General Procedures
         1. The Speech Contest Rulebook is protocol and applies to all official Toastmasters speech contests. Modifications to rules may only be made through the administrative protocol review process. Exemptions are not permitted.
         2. At each level of a Toastmasters speech contest, a specified number of voting judges and officials are required:
            1. At contest level: A contest chair, chief judge, at least five voting judges, a tie-breaking judge, two counters, and two timers
            2. At Area level: Same as above plus have an equal number of judges from each club in the Area
            3. Division level: Same above except seven voting judges
            4. District level: Same as above except three counter
         3. Voting judges at all levels must remain anonymous when practical
         4. Before the contest, contestants are briefed on the rules by the contest chair. Contestants will then draw for their speaking position in the contest chair
         5. If the contestant is absent from the briefing, the alternate speaker, if present, is permitted to attend the briefing in the place of the primary contestant.
         6. If the primary contestant is not present when the contest master is introduced, the primary contestant is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant
         7. Should the primary contestant arrive after the briefing but before the contest master is introduced, the primary contestant can compete, if they report to the contest chair up arrival, and all required paperwork is goof order, and waives the briefing.
         8. Before the contest:
            1. Voting judges, counters, and timers are briefed on their duties by the chief judge, each voting judge receives the appropriate ballot for the contest
            2. Timers receive the Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers and receive instruction in the proper use of the timing equipment
            3. Ballot counters receive the Counters Tally Sheet and receive instruction in the gathering of ballots and counting room procedures
            4. The chief judge selects a tie-breaking judge (only known to him)
            5. The contest chair must introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant’s name, speech title, speech title, and contestant’s name.
            6. There is one minute of silence between contestant speech, during which voting judges mark their ballots
            7. When the last contestant finishes speaking, the contest chair will ask for silence until all ballots have been collected
            8. In order for a ballot to be valid, judges shall:

Complete their ballots by entering their choices for first, second, and third place

Print and sign their names on the ballot

Only provide bottom part of ballots

* + - * 1. Chief judge collects tie-breaking just ballot
        2. Ballot counters tally scores, and provides results to chief judge
        3. Chief judge records the rankings of all contestants on the Notification of Contest Winner form. The Chief Judge records the results in the reverse order, and gives to the Contest Chairperson.
        4. Once winners announced, chief judge destroys all ballots, the time record, and tally sheet
        5. The Contest Chairperson interviews the contestants and announces the winners
    1. Timing of the Speeches
       1. Two timers are appointed by the chief judge. One is provided with a stop watch, and the other with a signaling device that displays green, yellow, and red colors
       2. The signaling device must be in full view of each contestant.
       3. The timer must be pinned to the contestant during their speech. This ensures the contestant sees the colors.
       4. The Timer provides a written record of the elapse time of each speech
       5. All speeches delivered by contestants must conform to the timing guidelines for the contest
          1. International Speech: Contest speech must be from five to seven minutes
          2. Tall Tale Speech: Contest speech must be from three to five minutes
       6. Timing of speeches begin with the contestant’s first definite verbal or nonverbal communication with the audience
       7. No signal is given for speeches that go over the allotted time
       8. In the event of technical failure of the signal or timing equipment, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
    2. Protests and disqualifications
       1. The one thing that remains as integral for the contest chairperson is the potential for protests or disqualifications that may be brought to you and/or the chief judge by a voting judge or contestant. You must have a process prepared and communicated to all involved.
       2. Protest are limited to eligibility, originality, and reference to another contestant’s speech and must only be lodged by voting judges and/or contestants. Any protest must be lodge with the chief judge and/or contest chair prior to the announcement of the winners and alternates
       3. Protest from the audience are not considered
       4. The contest chair can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility
       5. All decisions of the voting judges, and qualifying judges are final

[Questions?] (2 minutes)

**CONTEST RULES**

1. SHOW Contest Rules (1 minute)
   1. This year, District 66 is hosting just International and Tall Tales Contests. Everything we will address going forward pertains to club tall tales and international speech contests only. Pages 15 through 17 discuss the International Speech Contest and page 19 has a couple additions specifically for Tall Tales.
   2. The International Speech Contest must be conducted in English
      1. The audio must be clear
      2. Use of only one camera, in focus
      3. The entire speaking area must be visible throughout the speech
      4. The speaking area must be fully lit
      5. Recordings cannot be edited
   3. The Tall Tale Contest must follow all rules in the General Section of the Rulebook
      1. The subject must be highly exaggerated, improbable3 nature and have a theme or plot
      2. Humor and props may be used to support or illustrate the speech

[Questions] (1 minute)

**CHECK IT OFF THE LIST**

1. SHOW Check It Off The List (1 minute)

Next, we will go through the checklists for each of the main players. Beginning with the chairperson…

1. SHOW Check It Off The List (Chairperson Checklist) (2 minutes)
   1. The chairperson is the project manager with all that entails. Being well organized and able to motivate and manage people as well as tasks is key to your success. As the contest chair, you must plan the contest budget, conduct a pre and post contest publicity programs, and see that all bills for the event are promptly paid the Contest Chairperson must ensure all speakers are eligible to complete and are familiar with the contest rules. The Chief Judge ensures the equipment is working properly, the judge committee have been briefed and understand their responsibility, and all awards have been presented. The general checklist for the chairperson is in page 20 through 22. It is broken up into sections about preparation, before, during and after the contest.
      1. Preparation: Determines the budge for the contest, remembering that contest income and expenses should break even. Allow for such expenses as awards, contest materials, deposits, meals, printing, postage, etc.
      2. Determines date and time for the speech contest
      3. Determines the agenda for the contest
      4. Arrange the supplies and services required for the event
      5. Order the certificates of participation for all contest speakers, and order trophies from World Headquarters for the winners.
      6. Selects the chief judge
      7. Notifies the contest officials of the time and date for the contest and dry run briefings
      8. Promotes the contest
      9. Ensure all contestants are eligible to compete in the contest
      10. Contestant’s Briefing: Verifies that all speakers are present and reviews the punctuation of their name
      11. Reviews the rules with the speakers
      12. Reviews the timing protocol with the speakers
      13. Draws the speaking order
      14. During the Contest: Opens the contest
      15. Receives confirmation from the chief judge that the judge committee has been briefed
      16. Introduces each speaker and interviews contestants while ballots are being tallied
      17. Address any protest
      18. Announces contest results
      19. Thanks everyone at end of contest
      20. After the contest: Provides contact information to chief judge
      21. Sends news releases
      22. Make sure all bills paid

[Questions] (1 minutes)

1. SHOW Check It Off The List (Chief Judge) (2 minutes)
   1. The Chief Judge has a lot of responsibility as it relates to the control. See pages 23 of the rulebook for specifics. As mentioned earlier, the Chief Judge is responsible for the judging of the contest.
   2. Before the Contest: Appoints and counsels voting judges, counters, timers, and tie-breaking judge
   3. Acts as chief counter; provides each counter with Counter Tally Sheet
   4. Conducts the judges’ briefing for all judges, ballot counters, and timers.
   5. Judge’s Briefing: Distribute voting material to judges
   6. Reviews ballot collecting process with judges
   7. Review Speech Contest Timesheet with Timers
   8. Brief the timers in the proper use of the timing equipment
   9. During The Contest: Collect Speech Contest Time Record Sheet from Timers
   10. Collects the Tie-Breaking Judges’ ballot
   11. Resolve any eligibility or originality protests
   12. Provide a list to the contest chair of placements of all contestants

[Questions] (1 minute)

1. SHOW Check It Off The List (Contestant) (1 minute)
   1. Lastly, pages 23 and 24 lay out what the contestants should be doing before and during the contest. It may make sense to provide these details to each contestant along with the paperwork they need to complete and any specific rules that apply to their presentation, such as protest, etc.
   2. Before the Contest: Select a topic and prepare their speech
   3. Attends the contestant briefing
   4. Understands the timing process
   5. Reviews, signs, and turns in the Speaker’s Certification of Eligibility and Originality Form
   6. Attends the Dry runs
   7. During the Contest: Prepare any props during the one minute of silence
   8. After introduction, begin speech
   9. Check timing signals

[Questions] (1 minute)

1. SHOW Check It Off The List (Zoom Team Checklist) (3 minutes)
   1. The rulebook does not address the Zoom team. It is important for you to work with Earl Reyes’ team to ensure that all duties related to the facilitation of the contest in a virtual platform have been reviewed and are understood by all. Zoom Facilitators (Zoom masters) will be essential workers, during the planning and conducting of your contest. District 66 has a team of trained and certified facilitators ready to help. Reach out to Earl at Earl.Reyes@verizon.net to get facilitators scheduled for your contests.
   2. Preparation: Schedule the club contest date/time with Earl Reyes and his team. This will ensure a Zoom Facilitator is assigned to assist you with your contest.
   3. Provide the Zoom Facilitator with breakout room or dry run requirements
   4. Provide Zoom Facilitator with any Share Screen or Poll requirements
   5. Before the Contest: Zoom Facilitator sets up breakout rooms for judge committee and contestants.
   6. Reviews audio, lighting, or prop requirements for the contest
   7. Works with the timer and contestant on pinning the timer to the contestant during the contest
   8. Works with contestants during the dry run to ensure all equipment is working properly
   9. Determines time for judge committee to enter the contest. Ensure all judge committee is in the appropriate breakout room before allowing contestants and others to enter the main room
   10. Ensure all members are name properly
   11. Ensure judge’s video are turned off
   12. Ensure all not speaking participant’s mic is muted
   13. During the Contest: Conducts final walk through with contestants
   14. Ensure all equipment is working properly
   15. Ensure timers are pinned to contestants
   16. Ensure breakout rooms are setup and members know when to go into those rooms
   17. Ensure all judges are muted, renamed, and video is off BEFORE leaving the breakout room
   18. Assist Contest Chair or Chief Judge with any equipment requirements

[Questions] (2 minutes)

**BEST PRACTICES**

1. SHOW Best Practices (5 minutes)
   1. The nest few slides were based on observations of best practices and not in the current Rulebook, but will be beneficial in competing in the virtual world. Although some of these may be up for observations, it is District 66’s idea that we all will adhere to the same standard and process. This will ensure uniformity, and reduce confusion and frustration as contestants move from club to area, etc., in speaking at a contest. I will discus the following and how they will benefit all participants through t the contest process.

* Preparation and Technology
  + Familiarize everyone with the virtual contest platform: This is different that the in person contest. All participants need to understand their role in the virtual contest world.
  + Understand purpose of Breakout Rooms: Breakout rooms are used for briefings, protests, and practices
  + Send all necessary forms to contestants and contest officials in advance: This can be done prior to the contest or while everyone is in the breakout rooms.
  + Ensure all participants are present: This is key for the understanding of the audio, visual, background, equipment requirement. Participants need to be at the dry run and contest day
  + Have primary and backup device: Ensure there is back up of the audio, lighting, props, timing mechanism, etc when possible
  + Ensure Judges are not visible. Ensure judges are renamed, muted, and video off BEFORE leaving the breakout room
* Communication during the contest
  + Expect online contest to take longer than in-person contest
  + Ensure all contestants and judges have the Chief Judge’s information
  + Create Breakout room for Contestants and Judges
  + Rename Participants
  + Judges and ballot counters remain anonymous
  + Send ballots to Chief Judge using text/email
* Contestants
  + Enable microphone, then say “ready”
  + Attend contestant briefing and dry run
  + Must be visible throughout speech
* Audio/Video/Background
  + Equipment should be eye level
  + Ensure everyone but contestant is muted
  + Maximize viewing area
  + Light should be behind webcam to provide best illumination
  + Test microphone
  + Clean background or virtual background
* Dry Run
  + Equipment check
  + Breakout Rooms
  + Complete & Turn in Eligibility Forms
  + Area Check (lighting, sound, movement, background)
  + Briefings
  + Practice
  + Judge renaming

[Questions] (2 minutes)

**CONTEST DAY**

1. SHOW Contest Day (2 minutes)
   1. Time Management
      1. Zoom Master opens up meeting 30 minutes prior to start of contest. This is to allow the judges, and ballot counters to enter the main room, and then go into the breakout room for briefings
      2. Once all judges are in the breakout room, the contestants can enter the main room and then go into another breakout room for their briefings
      3. The contestants have one final mini practice.
      4. Contestants also given instructions on being pinned by the timer. The Timer will perform final timer check with the contestants
   2. Equipment / Area / Sound Final Check
      1. Contestants conduct final check of equipment
      2. Contestants understand screen limitations
      3. All persons not required to speak are muted by Zoom Master
   3. Use of Breakout Rooms
      1. Contestants, Judges, Counters, Timers, go to their Breakout Room for last minute briefing, practices, and checks. Ensure all eligibility forms are accounted for
   4. Competition / Interview / Announcement
      1. Virtual Contest Audio/Visual using Zoom
      2. Contest Chair interviews contestants at the end of the contest
      3. Area/Division/District leadership provides comments/updates
      4. Announce winners
      5. Provide contestants contact information to chief judge to complete Notification of Contest
      6. Thanks all participants
      7. Concludes meeting

[Questions] (1 minute)

1. SHOW Aaron Beverly (10 minutes)
   1. Aaron Beverly, the 2019 International Speech Contest Winner provides a 9-minute presentation on how contestants can do well in a virtual contest world. Although this presentation is primarily for the contestant, he does provide a lot of information for conducting a contest in a virtual world.
2. SHOW Aaron Beverly Presentation

[Questions] (1 minute)

**SUMMARY**

1. SHOW Summary (2 minutes)
   1. We talked about the changes in competing in a virtual world. The success of a contest is initially based on the participants being knowledgeable, experienced, and willing to participate. Remember, EVERYONE should read and understand the rules and their role in the contest. We also discussed best practices in conducting a successful contest. The key things in conducting a contest in a virtual world is the purpose of the Zoom Facilitator. Dry runs are important in conducting a virtual contest as they concentrate on things such as audio, lights, and background setup. A Zoom Facilitator and conducting a Dry Run are new aspects to the contest world. These two things are important to the contests overall success. Understanding Breakout Rooms, Proper name displays, audio, lighting and background will prove beneficial. Practice in this new environment is important. Contest days reinforces the screen barriers, tests the audio, lighting, and background one last time, and most important, ensure all judges are properly renamed, muted, and video turned off. Performing contest in a virtual world can be intimidating in the beginning, but the more you understand and practice the rules, the better you will become. Preparation is the key to a successful contest.
2. SHOW Questions (3 minutes)
   1. Does anyone have any questions on today’s presentation?