

## **DISTRICT 84 TABLE TOPICS CONTEST CONTESTANTS BRIEFING NOTES**

1. The rules for the Table Topics Contest are found on pages 22-25 of the Speech Contest Rulebook.
2. All Toastmasters who are members in good standing in a Club in good standing are eligible to compete. Exceptions are: International Officers and Directors, District Officers, International Officer and Director candidates, and announced candidates for District Officers. District Officers are the District Governor, Lieutenant Governors, District Public Relations Officer, District Secretary, District Treasurer, Division Governors, Area Governors, and Immediate Past District Governor.
3. Toastmasters who are members in more than one Club and who meet all other eligibility requirements may compete in each Club contest in which membership in good standing is held. However, should a contestant win more than one Club Table Topics Contest, the contestant can represent only one of the Clubs at the Area level. No contestant can compete in more than one Area Table Topics Contest, even if the two Areas are in different Divisions.
4. A contestant must be a member in good standing of the Club, Area, or Division being represented when competing in a speech contest at the next level.
5. A member must maintain eligibility at all levels of any contest. If at any level it is discovered that a contestant was ineligible to compete at any previous level, the contestant must be disqualified even if the ineligibility is not discovered until a later level and has been corrected.
6. Each contestant must complete the Speaker's Certificate of Eligibility and Originality (form 1183) and submit it to the chief judge prior to the contest.
7. Contestants will draw for their speaking positions.
8. [This instruction may be omitted if all primary contestants are present for the briefing.] If a contestant is absent during the contestants briefing, the alternate speaker, if present, may attend the briefing.
9. [This instruction may be omitted if all primary contestants are present for the briefing.] When the contest Toastmaster is introduced, if not present, the primary contestant is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant. Where the primary contestant arrives and makes this known to the contest chairman and has all required paperwork in good order prior to the introduction, and missed the briefing, disqualification shall not occur and the primary

contestant may speak in the drawn order, but waives the opportunity of a briefing.

10. During the contest, contestants must remove their name badge or any other identification that bears their Toastmasters designation, club affiliation, or office held.
11. All contestants will speak from the same platform or area designated by the contest chairman with prior knowledge of all the judges and all the contestants. The contestants may speak from any position within the designated area and are not limited to standing at the lectern/podium. **The contest chairman has designated the following area as the designated speaking area:** \_\_\_\_\_ . Contestants cannot be disqualified for going outside of the designated speaking area, but judges may award lower marks to a contestant who violates this rule.
12. The use of the lectern/podium and the selection and use of a microphone are optional for each contestant.
13. All equipment will be available for contestants to practice prior to the contest. Contestants are responsible for arranging their preferred setup of the lectern/podium microphone and other equipment in a quiet manner before being introduced by the contest Toastmaster.
14. All contestants shall receive the same topic, which shall be of a general nature, and shall speak for two minutes. The topic shall not require a detailed knowledge but should lead to an opinion or conclusion.
15. When the contest begins, all contestants except the first shall leave the room. The topic is then read to the first contestant, who shall then speak on that topic for two minutes.
16. Each contestant will be introduced by announcing the contestant's name twice.
17. Speeches shall be two minutes long. Contestants who speak for less than one minute or more than two minutes 30 seconds shall be disqualified.
18. Timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal or non-verbal communication with the audience. This usually will be the first word uttered by the contestant, but would include any other communication such as sound effects, a staged act by another person, etc.
19. The green light will be turned on at one minute and will remain on for 30 seconds. The amber light will be turned on at one minute 30 seconds and remain on for 30 seconds. The red light will be turned on at two minutes and remain on

until the speech is concluded. No audible device, such as a buzzer, shall be used for the overtime period.

20. Any sightless contestant may request and must be granted a form of warning signal of his or her own choosing, which may be an audible device. The contestant must provide any special device required for such signal.
21. In the event of technical failure of the signal, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
22. There will be one minute of silence between contestants, during which the judges will mark their ballots.
23. (Page 25) Protests will be limited to judges and contestants. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chairman prior to the announcement of the winner and alternates. The contest chairman shall notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding eligibility prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned.
24. Any protest should be notified to the chief judge while the ballot counters are collecting the ballots. (The chief judge will be standing in the back of the room.) We **will not** be escorting the contestants and judges out of the room to ask whether there are any protests.
25. A contestant can only be disqualified in this contest for speaking over or under time or for violating the eligibility rules. Eligibility violations are the responsibility of the contest chairman, not the judges, and must be handled by the contest chairman. If you think that a contestant may have violated eligibility rules, your obligation is to report the possible violation immediately to the contest chairman.
26. Prior to announcing results, the chairman should announce if time disqualifications occurred, but not the names of the contestants involved.
27. Announcement of the contest winners is final, unless the list of winners is announced incorrectly, in which case the chief judge, ballot counters, or timers may immediately interrupt to correct the error.
28. All decisions of the judges are final.
29. Contestants are responsible for knowing and complying with the Speech Contest Rulebook published by Toastmasters International for this year. In the event of any conflict between the Rulebook and any statement in this briefing or in the contest itself, the Rulebook will govern and contestants will not be permitted to rely upon such statement.

## **DISTRICT 84 TABLE TOPICS CONTEST JUDGES, TIMERS, AND COUNTERS BRIEFING NOTES**

1. The rules for the Table Topics Contest are found on pages 22-25 of the Speech Contest Rulebook.
2. All Toastmasters who are members in good standing in a Club in good standing are eligible to compete. Exceptions are: International Officers and Directors, District Officers, International Officer and Director candidates, and announced candidates for District Officers. District Officers are the District Governor, Lieutenant Governors, District Public Relations Officer, District Secretary, District Treasurer, Division Governors, Area Governors, and Immediate Past District Governor.
3. Toastmasters who are members in more than one Club and who meet all other eligibility requirements may compete in each Club contest in which membership in good standing is held. However, should a contestant win more than one Club Table Topics Contest, the contestant can represent only one of the Clubs at the Area level. No contestant can compete in more than one Area Table Topics Contest, even if the two Areas are in different Divisions.
4. A contestant must be a member in good standing of the Club, Area, or Division being represented when competing in a speech contest at the next level.
5. A member must maintain eligibility at all levels of any contest. If at any level it is discovered that a contestant was ineligible to compete at any previous level, the contestant must be disqualified even if the ineligibility is not discovered until a later level and has been corrected.
6. Each contestant must complete the Speaker's Certificate of Eligibility and Originality (form 1183) and submit it to the chief judge prior to the contest.
7. All contestants will speak from the same platform or area designated by the contest chairman with prior knowledge of all the judges and all the contestants. The contestants may speak from any position within the designated area and are not limited to standing at the lectern/podium. **The contest chairman has designated the following area as the designated speaking area:**  
\_\_\_\_\_. Contestants cannot be disqualified for going outside of the designated speaking area, but you may take this rule violation into consideration when completing your Judge's Guide and Ballot and award lower marks to a contestant who violates this rule.
8. The use of the lectern/podium and the selection and use of a microphone are optional for each contestant.

9. Judges should not be looking for the timing lights. Judges should judge each contestant without regard to time.
10. Judges are reminded to be fair, impartial and unbiased – you have obligations to the contestants, the audience, and Toastmasters International.
11. Your responsibility is not to evaluate the speakers. Your only duty is to pick a winner – the speaker who has given the best speech tonight.
12. Each judge will complete the top part of the ballot after each contestant. There will be one minute of silence between contestants, during which you will mark your ballots.
13. After the last contestant, you will complete your ballot and list the first, second, and third place contestants. You must break any ties. Sign your ballot, tear off the bottom part, and put it in the envelope provided in your packet. If your ballot has ties, is not signed, or is not placed in the official envelope, your ballot will be discarded. **The identity of the judges should be unknown to the contestants or the audience before and after the contest.** When you have completed the ballot, hold (**not hold up**) your ballot for the ballot counters to collect. You should destroy the top half of the ballot after the contest and should not share it with anyone. Please review the judging criteria categories as well as the Judge's Code of Ethics on the back of the ballot before the start of the contest.
14. (Page 25) Protests will be limited to judges and contestants. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chairman prior to the announcement of the winner and alternates. The contest chairman shall notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding eligibility prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned.
15. Any protest should be notified to the chief judge while the ballot counters are collecting the ballots. (The chief judge will be standing in the back of the room.) We **will not** be escorting the contestants and judges out of the room to ask whether there are any protests.
16. A contestant can only be disqualified in this contest for speaking over or under time or for violating the eligibility rules. Eligibility violations are the responsibility of the contest chairman, not the judges, and must be handled by the contest chairman. If you think that a contestant may have violated eligibility rules, your obligation is to report the possible violation immediately to the contest chairman.
17. Announcement of the contest winners is final, unless the list of winners is announced incorrectly, in which case the chief judge, ballot counters, or timers may immediately interrupt to correct the error.
18. All decisions of the judges are final.

## Information for the Timers and Ballot Counters

1. Timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal or non-verbal communication with the audience. This usually will be the first word uttered by the contestant, but would include any other communication such as sound effects, a staged act by another person, etc.
2. The green light will be turned on at one minute and will remain on for 30 seconds. The amber light will be turned on at one minute 30 seconds and remain on for 30 seconds. The red light will be turned on at two minutes and remain on until the speech is concluded. No audible device, such as a buzzer, shall be used for the overtime period.
3. Any sightless contestant may request and must be granted a form of warning signal of his or her own choosing, which may be an audible device. The contestant must provide any special device required for such signal.
4. In the event of technical failure of the signal, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
5. Timers will give their reports to the chief judge at the conclusion of the contest.
6. **The identity of the judges should be unknown to the contestants or the audience before and after the contest.** The judges will *not* hold up the ballots for collection by the ballot counters. At the briefing, the ballot counters should make note of the table numbers where the judges will be seated. When the time comes to collect the ballots, the ballot counters will go to those tables to collect the ballots from the judges.
7. Each ballot counter will tally all ballots to ensure accuracy. After all ballots are tallied, the Time Record Sheets will be checked to determine whether there were any disqualifications due to time. If there is a tie, the Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot will be opened to break the tie. The ballot counters will list the first, second, and third place contestants on the Counter's Tally Sheet and give it to the chief judge.
8. Prior to announcing results, the chairman should announce if time disqualifications occurred, but not the names of the contestants involved.

## DISTRICT 84 TABLE TOPICS CONTEST SUGGESTED SCRIPT

**Contest Master** starts the contest by saying:

“The purposes of the Table Topics Contest are to provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training, to encourage development of impromptu and extemporaneous speaking skills, and to recognize the best as encouragement to all.

In the interests of time, we will conduct this contest using the same procedure as Toastmasters International uses in conducting the International Speech Contest. The judges, contestants, functionaries, and sergeants-at-arms have been fully briefed on the rules. The contestants have been informed of the location of the timing lights.

There will be no photography during the contest. The sergeants-at-arms are instructed to close the doors and not admit anyone while the speakers are giving their presentations. Please turn off your cell phones and pagers for the duration of this contest.

Timers, please make a last check of the timing lights.

Protests are limited to judges and contestants. The decision of the judges is final. Announcement of the results is final.

The contestants have drawn their speaking positions. The order is:

(read names of contestants in speaking order)

All contestants will be given the same topic. When the contest begins, the sergeant-at-arms will escort all contestants except the first to a waiting room. The topic is then read to the first contestant, who will speak on that topic for two minutes. There will be one minute of silence between contestants for the judges to mark their ballots. During that time, you may quietly enter or leave the room. Please do not talk during this time. At the conclusion of the contest, the ballot counters will collect the judges' ballots. The timers will deliver their reports to the chief judge.

Are the timers ready?

Sergeant-at-arms, please escort all contestants, except contestant No. 1, to the waiting room. Let me know when that has been accomplished. We will observe one minute of silence before the first Table Topics speech.”

**Timers** start the one minute after the contestants have left the room. Give a red light at the end of one minute. The **SAA** conducts the first contestant to the podium.

**Contest Master** introduces the contestant as in the following example. *Note: Do not make preliminary remarks about any speaker or the subject, nor mention the name or location of the speaker's club or place of residence.*

"The first contestant, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_(topic),  
(repeat topic), (repeat name)."

After the first speech, **Contest Master** calls for one minute of silence. *Note: Do not comment on the speech or the contestant. It is the responsibility of the Contest Master to use the gavel to maintain silence during this period.*

Repeat this introduction and conclusion for each contestant, including the final contestant. After the final contestant, allow one additional minute of silence for the judges to complete their ballots.

**Contest Master** calls for actions as follows:

"The judges are instructed to complete their ballots, sign them, put them in their envelopes and hold them for collection by the ballot counters. The timers will deliver their reports to the chief judge."

**Contest Master** congratulates all contestants and calls for applause.

**Contest Master** recognizes the following functionaries:

- Ballot Counters
- Timers
- Sergeant-at-arms
- Assistant Sergeants-at-arms
- Judges (anonymous)
- Chief Judge

After results have been tabulated, **Contest Master** announces time disqualification, if any, without naming the contestant. **Contest Master** calls each contestant forward in alphabetical order for presentation of the contestant trophies or certificates. **Contest Master** congratulates all contestants as a group and calls for applause.

**Contest Master** announces winners in the order: third place, second place, and first place. *Note: All levels of contests must abide by the Speech Contest Rules which state: "In contests with five or more participants, a third place winner (if wanted), a second place winner, and a first place winner will be announced. In contests with four or fewer participants, a second place and first place winner will be announced." In other words, even if there are only three contestants, the second and first place winners must be announced.*