



District 71

How to run winning contests

Notes from the session

By

The District 71 Chief Judges' Team

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Introduction

Welcome everyone. I hope you enjoyed the webinar *How to run winning contests*. In case you weren't able to join us there are a set of resources that you can download at:

<https://1drv.ms/f/s!AjZOWUmHbRltg6hTLgkQuzMvcN6VTQ?e=XaSzSb>

After the webinar, I shall put a copy of the video in the same location so that you can watch it later if you wish.

In the meantime, these notes contain the material covered in the webinar and a link to all the resources to help you run successful competitions.

As always if you have questions, you are welcome to send them to the District Chief Judges' team will get an answer back to you. Our email is: chaird71contestandjudgingteam@gmail.com .

Let's get started.

Process for a winning contest.

To give you all the resources to run winning contests in the sensible fashion we've laid out the process on the next page. Bearing in mind that we all started on 1 July, like many other officers this is our first attempt to put something together that will give you everything you need.

I have no doubt that as you start to use these resources, you'll come up with bright ideas to improve both the process and the resources that we provided. We'd be grateful if you can send us your ideas on the email above so that we can add and improve the process.

Also, you should be aware that this is just our way of running a contest. We do between us have an awful lot of experience of both being in contests and running them, so we think it's a fairly practical approach. However, some of you will have your own way of running the contest and as long as it produces a fair result, you are welcome to carry on with your own method. Just remind you as above, if you got something good that works letters know so we can share it with everyone running a contest.

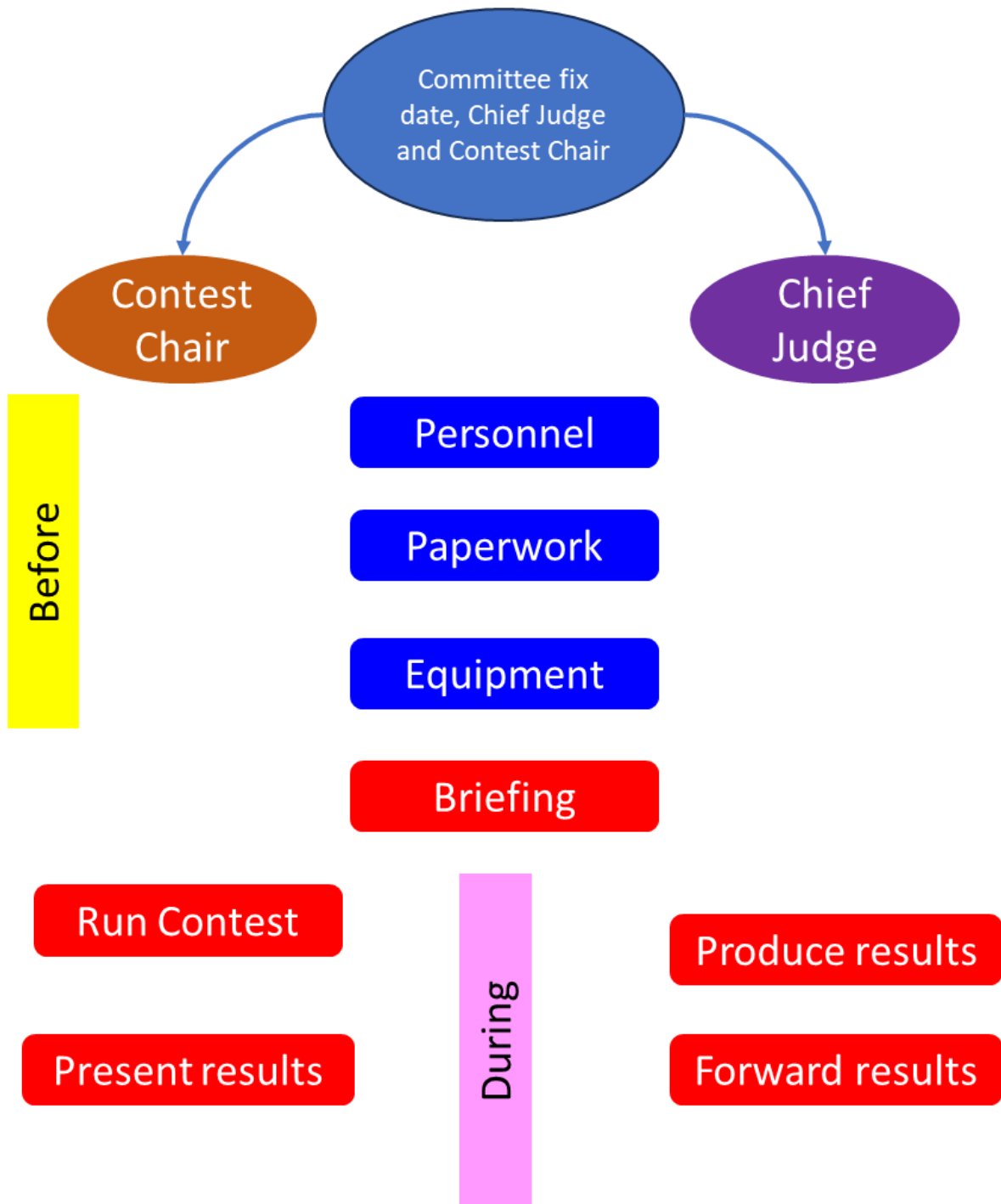
Also, the district has now decided that every competition above club level will be an in-person contest. For that reason, these notes really address in-person contest only, although you will see some items still carry a legacy from the days of hybrid meetings.

What about the process?

We've laid out the process of running a contest in the diagram on the next page. It split primarily between what happens before the contest (the blue blocks), and what happens during the contest (the red blocks). There is a small amount for the Chief Judge to do after the contest, but we've included that in the during section .

We split the tasks between those that are done by the Contest Chair, and those done by the Chief Judge.

We take you through each block pointing you towards the resources and giving you any tips that we think will be helpful.



The Contest Process













BEFORE THE CONTEST

Step 1 – Fix the Contest Date, Chief Judge and Contest Chair

The club committee, area, division, or district leadership team should decide on the date they want to hold the competition and who will be the Chief Judge and the Contest Chair.






















Once the Chief Judge and Contest Chair have agreed, the leadership teams would source the venue, and any refreshments, but the rest of the competition should be run by the two key functionaries.

There is a planning spreadsheet to help the Chief Judge and Contest Chair plan the competition. You'll find in the resources link there are four spreadsheets: one for each competition.

 Contest Planning-Evaluation V2.xlsx	 
 Contest Planning-Humorous V2.xlsx	 
 Contest Planning-International V2.xlsx	 
 Contest Planning-Table Topics V2.xlsx	 

The planning spreadsheet should be placed somewhere to give both the Chief Judge and Contest Chair access, so they can both fill in their part of the contest, and see what progress is made on the others part.

To help each of the chief functionaries there are set of contest notes for every competition in the resources too. Four with CC for Contest Chair and four with CJ for Chief Judge.

 Evaluation_Contest Notes_CC.doc	 
 Evaluation_Contest Notes_CJ.doc	 
 IS_H_Contest Notes_CC.doc	 
 IS_H_Contest Notes_CJ.doc	 
 Toastmasters International resources.docx	 
 TT_Contest Notes_CC.doc	 
 TT_Contest Notes_CJ.doc	 

These notes also split up the activities into before and during the contest.

Step 2 **Personnel**

Functionaries have to get the volunteers to help run the contest.

For the Contest Chair, that will mean getting all the competitors, plus a test speaker for the evaluation contest, and a sergeant at arms for the table topics contest.

For the Chief Judge, there are a lot more people needed as follows:

Deputy CJ (especially good if you are still using Zoom)

Judges (Club 5*, Area 5*, Division 7, District 7)

Tiebreak judge (1 all contests)

Counters (Club 2*, Area 2*, Division 2, District 3)

Timers (Club 2*, Area 2*, Division 2, District 3)

* numbers required unless impractical.

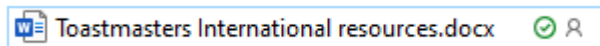
It's also wise to have some spares available on the night, just in case someone doesn't turn up.

Step 3

Paperwork

The next step is to gather all the paperwork needed to run your competition. Fortunately, Toastmasters International has made this really easy.

There is a file in the resources link called *Toastmasters International resources.docx*



In there is the link to the Toastmasters International website contest kits page.

There is a contest kit for every competition is shown below.

SPEECH CONTEST TYPES AND RESOURCES

International

Contestants present a five- to seven-minute speech on any subject they choose. All districts must conduct this contest.

Humorous

Contestants present a humorous speech that must be thematic in nature (opening, body, and close), not a monologue (series of one-liners).

Evaluation

Contestants observe a five- to seven-minute test speech and then present a two- to three-minute evaluation of the test speech.

Tall Tales

Contestants present a speech on a topic that is highly exaggerated and improbable in theme or plot.

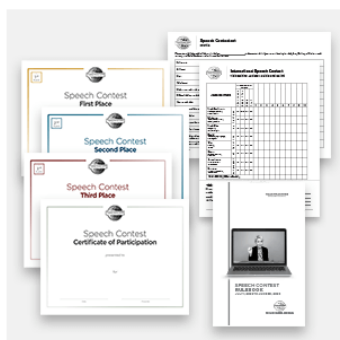
Table Topics

The topic of this impromptu speech is the same for all contestants who only learn about it when they are introduced by the contest chair.

Video Speech

A contest for undistricted clubs and provisional Districts that follows the rules of the International Speech Contest; it does not advance beyond the club level.

Each of the blue titles is a link that takes you to the speech contest kit for each different contest. When you get to that page you will see the following.



International Speech Contest Kit

Supplies for conducting a International Speech Contest. Contains enough materials for five contestants and ten judges.

[Download Kit >](#)

Just click on the “download” link and it will download the full contest kit to your computer.

Note that both the Chief Judge and the Contest Chair should have a copy of the rules, however currently the speech contest kits all contain last year’s rules. For a set of the current rulebook follow the link: <https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/2023-2024-speech-contest-rulebook> .

You’ll find in there:

For the Contest Chair, there are the certificates for the first, second, and third place speakers, plus participation certificates you can print for all speakers.

Decide who is going to sign the certificates. I'm not aware of any hard and fast rules on this. I've seen the Contest Chair sign them, the Chief Judge because there the person who determines the result at the end, or even the Area, Division, or District Director if they're presenting the certificates.

I'm not sure it makes much difference who does it, but that should be determined at the start.

The Contest Chair should fill in the certificates as much as possible prior to the night. They can do all the certificates of participation, and if they're signing the certificates sign and date and put the contest details in in advance.

For the Chief Judge, the contest kit contains:

The judges' forms, the tiebreak judge's forms, the timers' forms, and the counters tally forms. These will need printing in appropriate numbers for the totals of each functionary you have.

Step 4 **Equipment**

The final step in the pre-contest organisation is to make sure that the equipment you need will be available on the night.

For the Contest Chair, the only other thing they need is a set of numbers to draw for speaking order. I personally just take a pack of cards and pick out the numbers ace to however many competitors we have. It's easy to mix them up on a table and allow everyone to pick up a card does designate their speaking position.

For the Chief Judge, you should ensure there will be a set of timing lights, plus a set of coloured cards as a standby in case the timing lights fail.

It also used to be the Chief Judge's job to make sure there were stopwatches there for the timers. However, my experience is that most timers nowadays use the stopwatches on their phones. It might just be wise to have a backup in case somebody comes without a phone.

DURING THE CONTEST

Step 5 Briefing

For both the Contest Chair and the Chief Judge, there are suggested briefings in the contest notes.

Both need to make sure that the people that they are briefing arrive at the contest in plenty of time. Make sure you notify all the contestants and functionaries what time the contest is, what time the doors open, and what time the briefing will take place. Allow plenty of spare time in case any late comers.

In the past, especially with the challenges of hybrid meetings I decided to do my briefings online. I held a Zoom meeting on my own, delivered the briefing and recorded it. I put it onto YouTube so that if I had to grab a judge at the last moment instead of it taking all my time to brief them, I could just give them the link and say, “watch this”.

You can see my video briefing at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-v69jxK4jw>

At the time I felt it covered everything that the briefing needed to. I also transcribed the briefings for the judges, counters, and timers so that again if I was short of time, I could hand the briefing to somebody to read before the contest.

I’ve put the three versions of my transcribed briefings into the resources link. You are welcome to take them and modify them as you wish for your own purpose.

The Contest Chair needs to brief the competitors, and sergeant-at- arms if it’s a table topics contest.

The Chief Judge has to brief the judges, timers, and counters.

The Tiebreak Judge may also need briefing. Generally, we pick someone really experience to do this role and so no briefing is necessary, although it’s worth reminding them that their responsibilities to place all competitors in the contest. If you do want to take the tiebreak judge through briefing this should be done separately and not with the main judges. The tiebreak judge should remain anonymous.

Step 6 Run Contest

The Contest Chair runs the contest. Before the contest starts, they should check that the Chief Judge has the first, second, and third place certificates ready for filling in when they determine the results.

The contest notes in the resources link provide step-by-step instructions on what to do while running the contest. Before the contest starts check with the Chief Judge that all the judges, timers, and counters, have been briefed.

As well as running the contest as per the notes, just keep your mind open for originality issues that might be liable to protest. Only the judges and contestants may lodge a protest. That could come to you as contest chair, or the Chief Judge. If it comes to you, pass it on to the Chief Judge for handling.

At the end of the contest when the judges to finish their deliberation, and all the voting slips have been taken in, you will need some form of fill in to keep the audience occupied while the result is determined. Sometimes that is done with contestant interviews, but you should also have some extra activity in case the result is returned by the time you finish the interviews.

The Chief Judge will watch the contest in relative relaxation. Like the Contest Chair, they will try to be aware of any issues that may be because of protest on the basis of originality or mentioning someone else's speech.

Step 7 **Produce results**

The contest chair will then carry on with the contestant interviews or whatever time filler they have chosen.

When the contest is over, the counters should collect all the judges' voting slips.

The Chief Judge will collect the timesheet and they will all leave the room to a separate place to determine the result.

If there has been a protest, this should be dealt with first. To deal with a protest the Chief Judge, and all the judges will go to the separate place to discuss the merits of the protest. Once their view is clear, the contestant must be allowed to respond to the judges over the protest. This is covered in the rulebook in Section 7.

Once all the judges are agreed on the decision, this is final.

Assuming there are no protests, which is the normal position, the Chief Judge and counters go through the judging forms to determine the results as follows.

1. Each judge's result is entered onto the counters tally sheet with the first-place speaker allotted three points, the second-place speaker allotted two points, and the third-place speaker allotted one point.
2. Every speaker's score is totalled up. The point of having two counters with the Chief Judge is to ensure there is no arithmetic error.
3. The Chief Judge will show the counters the timer's form. Any contestant where both timers have recorded a time outside those specified in the rules, will be disqualified and their schools will be disregarded thereafter.
4. The Chief Judge and the counters will agree on the initial ranking of the speakers. Any speakers that are tied for a position, will all be allocated that position, but then the next number must be the correct number of contestants higher. For example, if there are two speakers tied for second place, they will both initially be given second place, but the next speaker will be positioned in fourth place.
5. Once all speakers have been given an initial position, those that are tied will be separated in accordance with their position on the tiebreak judge's form. Note, tied competitors do not need to be next to one another on the tiebreak judge's form. For example, in the case above where both Contestant A, and Contestant B, were tied for second place, it may be on the tiebreak judge's form Contestant A is third and Contestant B was fifth. Because Contestant A appears before Contestant B on the tiebreak judge's form, contestant a will be second, and contestant B will be third.
6. Finally, the adjusted position of all competitors can be listed on the counters tally sheet.

7. The final positions should be entered in the 1168 results form which shows the top three positions in reverse order and has a box to tick to show whether anyone was time disqualified.
8. The full listing of all contestants in their final position should be entered into form 1182 - notification of contest winner which should then be passed on to the next level contest. It is important to pass on this listing of all contestants in their final order because it may well be at the next level competition that there are contestants who can't attend and then the next speaker in order will be offered the chance to compete.
9. Fill in the three place certificates.
10. Return to the contest room and hand the Contest Chair the form 1168 - results form. I always think it's wise to mention at that stage if there are any time disqualifications. There should be no mention of who has been disqualified. Also, handover the three filled in place certificates.

Step 8

Present results

The Chief Judge can now relax! Their only job is now to forward the 1182 - Notification of contest winner form to the next level contest organiser.

The Contest Chair can then together with any guest who's going to present the certificates, announce the contest results in reverse order.

Once all the presentations have been made, the contest chair should then give votes of thanks to all those who have helped run the competition, announce when the next level of the competition will take place, and again congratulate all the competitors. They can then hand back to whoever is closing the contest meeting.