NATIONAL FEDERATION OF YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS

Status Final
July2025

"How to" Guide – Mace Debating

Remember: This is a guide to how the competition could be run and is not strict rules.

1.1. **The Panel** made up 5 members:

1.2. **Format**

Timing	Opposition 2	Opposition 1	Chair	Proposition 1	Proposition 2
Start			Welcome & introduces the debate, teams & 1st Proposition Speaker (approx. 2 minutes)		
02:00	(Opposition can interject with Points of Information during the unprotected time of the Proposition speech)			Defines motion, outlines proposition case, delivers own arguments and summarises proposition case (6 minutes)	
08:00			Introduces 1st Opposition Speaker (approx. 30 seconds)		
08:30		Outlines opposition case, rebuts proposition arguments, delivers own arguments and summarises opposition case (6 minutes)		(Proposition can interject with Points of Information during the unprotected time of the Opposition speech)	
14:30			Introduces 2nd Proposition Speaker (approx. 30 seconds)		
15:00	(Opposition can interject with Points of Information during the unprotected time of the Proposition speech)				Rebuts, recaps, outlines, delivers own arguments and summarises (4 minutes)

19:00			Introduces 2nd Opposition Speaker (approx. 30 seconds)		
19:30	Rebuts, recaps, outlines, delivers own arguments and summarises (4 minutes)			(Proposition can interject with Points of Information during the unprotected time of the Opposition speech)	
23:30			Invites speakers from the floor (not questions but points or queries to be used in summary speeches) (up to 5 minutes)		
28:30			Introduces summary speaker for opposition (approx. 30 sec)		
29:00	One of the members of the opposition team summarises, referring to own case and floor debate (4 minutes)				
33:00			Introduces summary speaker for proposition (approx. 30 sec)		
33:30				One of the members of the proposition team summarises, referring to own case and floor debate (4 minutes)	
37:30			End of Debate: Conducts votes on motion, thanks speakers and concludes the debate (approx. 2 minutes)		
39:30	**End**				

1.3. **Role descriptions**

Chair:

- The chair is responsible for inviting speakers to deliver their speech, thanking them and calling on the next speaker, calling on audience members to make points during the floor debate and maintaining good general order. Taking the vote (show of hands – those for the motion, those against and any abstentions) and concluding the debate.
- The chair is also responsible for time keeping, giving audible signals indicating when a speaker is in protected time (1 minute at the beginning and end of each speech) or unprotected time (middle section of each speech) and indicating when a speaker's time is up. The chair should record the length of each speech and give the timings to the judges after the debate.
- 30 minutes planning time before competition – Chair if they can gather information from each participant so they can be introduced correctly and see if can gather any information about what they are planning to cover.

Note: Good practice is to use a bell to signify the timings

Proposition:

First Speaker 1:

(Max 6 minutes – time penalties will incur if over time)

- Define the motion the Chair gives
- Outlines the arguments the proposition will make towards the motion

- Set up the debate in terms of what the proposition wants to debate
- If the opposition interject with a point of information (POI) the speaker has to choose whether to accept it or not. If accepted listen to the POI and respond and then continue with your speech as though the POI never happened
- Keep within the time and remember that time taken in dealing with Points of Information are included in the overall time for the speech.
- To offer Points of Information (POI) to other speakers when they are in unprotected time

Second Speaker 2:

(Max 4 minutes – time penalties will incur if over time)

- Rebut the argument made in the First Opposition's speech
- Expand on the arguments made by team member (speaker 1)
- Introduce new arguments that expand on the motion or introduce a new angle of the argument and develop it fully
- If the opposition interject with a point of information (POI) the speaker has to choose whether to accept it or not. If accepted listen to the POI and respond and then continue with your speech as though the POI never happened
- Keep within the time and remember that time taken in dealing with Points of Information are included in the overall time for the speech.
- To offer Points of Information (POI) to other speakers when they are in unprotected time

Proposition Summary Speaker (can be either 1 or 2):

(Max 4 minutes – time penalties will incur if over time)

- To use the full range of arguments made in the debate to their advantage, reminding the audience and judge of the Points of Information their team made and why they exposed the flaws in the proposition case
- Refer to the floor debate and draw on points or queries from the audience to their advantage
- Convince the audience and adjudicators that their case was better
- The summary speech should not contain any new material not raised in the main speeches or the floor debate
- No Points of Information can be given in the summary speech

Opposition:

First Speaker 1:

(Max 6 minutes – time penalties will incur if over time)

- Rebut the arguments made in the First Proposition speech
- Outline all the arguments to be made by Opposition
- Make a substantive case for the opposition instead of just denying what the proposition have said
- If the proposition interjects with a point of information (POI) the speaker has to choose whether to accept it or not. If accepted listen to the POI and respond and then continue with your speech as though the POI never happened
- Keep within the time and remember that time taken in dealing with Points of Information are included in the overall time for the speech.
- To offer Points of Information (POI) to other speakers

Second Speaker 2:

(Max 4 minutes – time penalties will incur if over time)

- Rebut the arguments made in the Second Proposition speech
- Expand on the arguments made by team member (speaker 1)
- To use the full range of arguments made in the debate to their advantage
- Introduce new arguments that expand on the case or to introduce a new angle of the argument and develop it fully
- If the proposition interjects with a point of information (POI) the speaker has to choose whether to accept it or not. If accepted listen to the POI and respond and then continue with your speech as though the POI never happened
- Keep within the time and remember that time taken in dealing with Points of Information are included in the overall time for the speech.
- To offer Points of Information (POI) to other speakers

Opposition Summary Speaker (can be either 1 or 2):

(Max 4 minutes – time penalties will incur if over time)

- To use the full range of arguments made in the debate to their advantage; reminding the audience and judge of the Points of Information their team made and why they exposed the flaws in the proposition case
- Refer to the floor debate and draw on points or queries from the audience to their advantage
- Persuade the audience and adjudicators that their case was stronger
- The summary speech should not contain any new material not raised in the main speeches or the floor debate
- No points of information to be given in the summary speech

30 minutes before Competition:

- Chair and Opposition and Proposition members get together in room to share information. Chair will want information to be able to introduce you during the competition.
- Be careful what you share as you don't want to give away too much.

TERMS DEFINED

Protected Time:

- The first minute and the last minute of each main speech
- All of the Summary Speeches are protected
- Protected time signalled by Chair

Unprotected time:

- After the first minute and before the last minute of a main speech
- Unprotected time signalled by Chair

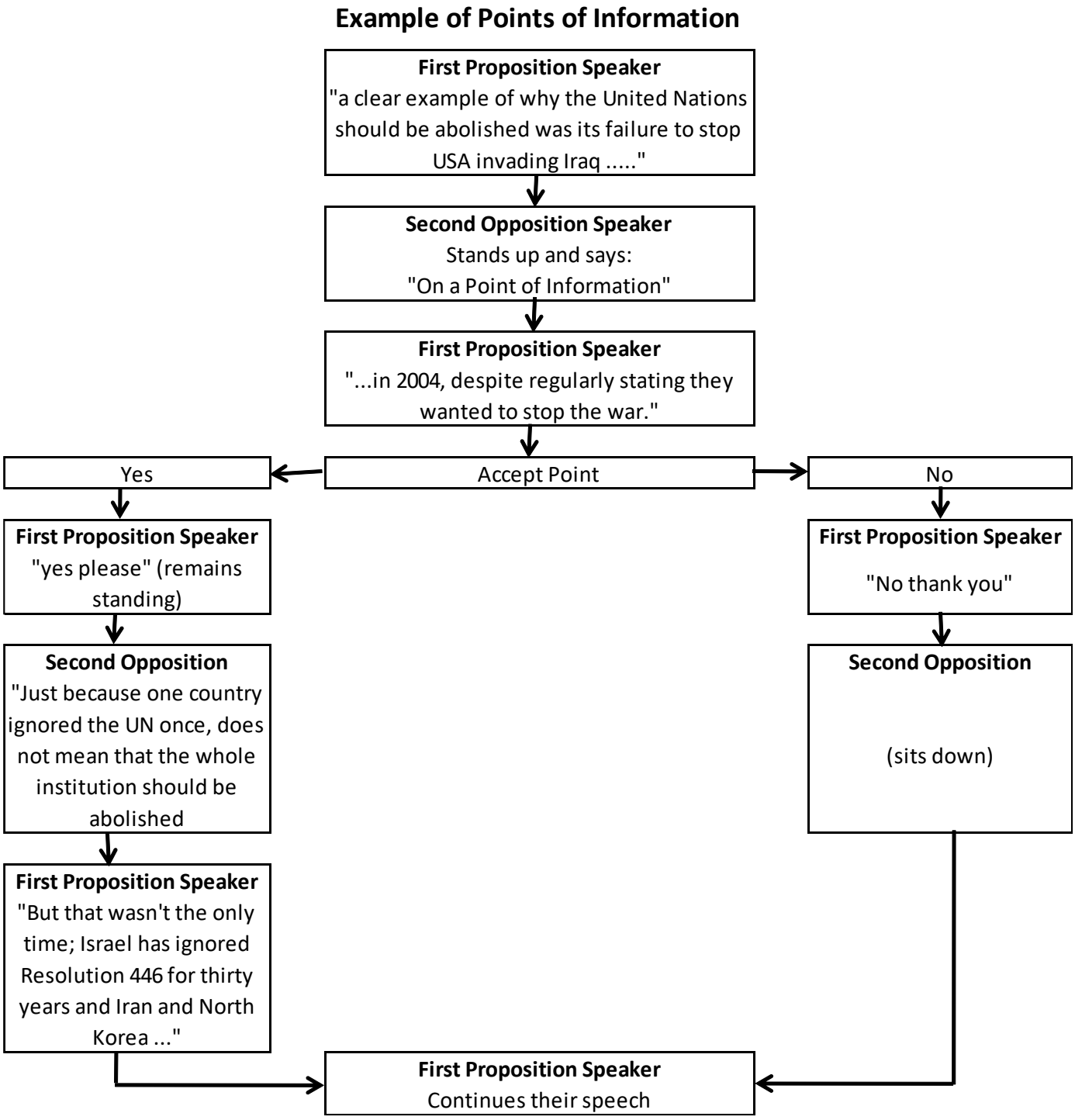
Rebuttal

- Addressing the other side's arguments during your own speech is known as rebuttal
- The aim or rebuttal is to undermine the opposition's case and leave your own case looking stronger
- Rebuttal can be at any time during the speech but make sure the audience and adjudicators are clear that you are addressing the other sides arguments

Points of Information:

- A formal interjection which may be made during an opposing speakers' speech. A POI is offered when a speaker stands up and addresses the current speaker saying, "on a point of information" or "on that point". POI may be accepted or declined by the current speaker, if declined, the speaker offering the POI must resume their seat. If accepted the speaker offering the POI may make a **brief** point after which they must resume their seat, and the current speaker continues with their speech. **Please note that POIs are up to the debating members to manage at no point does the Chair manage POIs. If the point becomes too long, it is up to the interrupted speaker to interrupt and carry on with their speech.**
- Further information can be found from the English Speaking Union (ESU) -
- These are central to the interactivity of the debate and demonstrate ability to engage in arguments (approx. 25% of the teams' marks are for listening and response)
- These cannot be made during the first and last minute of the main speeches or during the summary speeches, this time is known as protected time.
- Points of Information are included in the time limit

An example of Point of Information:



Mark Scheme Explanation (Judges and Competitors Guidance)

Reasoning and Evidence Features: Relevancy of arguments, relevant empirical evidence to support ideas, analysed arguments from premise to conclusions. Speeches that score highly for reasoning and evidence are highly relevant and well-constructed, providing logical and persuasive arguments for their side. They work through from basic assertions to well justified conclusions, making use of evidence that supports their case. Arguments are not only relevant and well analysed, but also must have their importance demonstrated, and a weight given in reference to other material in the debate.

Reasoning is about the content of the individual arguments each speaker makes and how well they are explained.

Revisited material
Did the speaker choose the most powerful examples and analogies to revisit in their summary speech?
New material
New material is only permitted if it elaborates – or responds to – material already mentioned by another speaker in the debate. A small amount of interesting relevant new material of this type can be rewarded. Totally new material should be penalised.
Clarity and logic
Are the arguments explained clearly and logically?
Examples and analogies
Are the arguments supported by a sufficient number of examples and analogies? Facts, statistics, case studies, new stories, historical or scientific references and other evidence should be relevant and have a credible source.
Links to the motion
Are the arguments relevant to the motion? The higher mark for first proposition reflects the particular importance of setting up a strong proposition case and a clear debate. A sensible, concise comprehensive definition of motion should be rewarded.

Organisation and Prioritisation Features: Marked out arguments, signposted ideas, internal structure, ranking of most relevant ideas, preference best ideas. Speeches that show strong organisation and prioritisation are exceptionally clear in communicating ideas. They introduce the most relevant ideas and make use of them, without rushing through or introducing every possible relevant argument. Arguments are signposted well, and it is clear when a speech moves from one idea to the next.

Choice of arguments
There is not time to summarise every argument raised in the debate. Summary speakers should concentrate on the main points of contention that are key to winning over the audience.
Team Structure
Did the team's speeches complement each other?
Did the first speaker outline a clear case which the team followed?
Were the arguments in the case arranged such that the most important arguments were given appropriate emphasis?
Individual structure
Was each individual speech well-structured and easy to follow?
Were individual arguments grouped into a logical and coherent speech?
Were the most important arguments emphasised?
Adaptability
Did the speakers show that they were able to reorganise their material if developments in the debate necessitated it?
Timing
Was the allotted time used wisely, with sufficient time being given to a discussion of each major area of clash in the debate?
Did the speakers speak for approximately their allotted time? Did they divide their time sensibly between their different points?

Listening and Response Features: Rebuttal and points of information, relevance to arguments, level of response given, prioritization. Speeches that score well in terms of listening and response show an incisive ability to engage with the very roots of the case presented by the opposing bench. Rather than tackling simply examples or evidence, they undermine the principles or concepts on top of which arguments are built. Speakers will aim to undermine the most important material in both rebuttal, points of information, and also their main constructive material. They will be flexible in their approach to the debate and will weight their own ideas in reference to the opposing bench.

Own team
Has the speaker listened to their own team, reflecting what was actually said rather than what was planned beforehand?
Rebuttal
Has the summary speaker listened carefully to their opponents and shown why they disagree with the key arguments?
Floor debate
Were key points referred to?
Rebuttal
Have speakers been listening carefully to their opponents and shown, in their own speeches, why they disagree?
Points of Information are not allowed in summary speeches; the speaker's ability in this area is assessed as part of their main speech.
Points of Information
Speakers show listening skills through taking and making Points of Information. Speakers should not be penalised if no points are offered to them or if they offer enough points, but none are accepted.
Making Points of Information
Have speakers made good Points of Information, showing they have been listening and picking out important points to challenge as a point of information rather than to use as a rebuttal? Have they made their Points of Information brief?
Taking Points of Information
Have speakers handled the Points of Information offered appropriately? Where a Point of information has been accepted has it been answered promptly and capably?

Expression and Delivery Features: Eye contact, hand gestures, stance, emotive language, rhetorical devices and questions, pacing. Speeches that score highly on expression and delivery demonstrate a clear awareness of rhetoric and attempt to engage an audience. They make use of tools such as eye contact, hand gestures, and some emotive language to engage with the judges. They may make use of notes, but as a prompt, rather than to rehearse or read the speech.

Expression and delivery focuses not on what is said, but how it is said. The mark is for how much they engage the audience, including:
Use of Notes
How effective is the speaker's use of notes? Speakers should have some notes from which they speak fluently. Speakers should be penalised for reading speeches which they have written out in full beforehand or for reciting memorised speeches, which have been learnt by note.
Use of Voice
Are the speakers audible and clear, while varying speed, volume and intonation to keep their speeches interesting and to add conviction and authority?
Use of Words
Is language varied, persuasive, appropriate and precise?
Use of body language
How effective are hand gestures, eye contact and facial expressions?
Rhetoric and humour
Is there an appropriate level of rhetoric and relevant humour?

Scoring
Teams' total scores therefore consist of 230 points: 30 points for the Chair; 40 points for the proposer; 40 points for the opposer; 40 points for the second proposer; 40 points for the second opposer; 20 points for the opposition summary and 20 points for the proposition summary.

Judges' Feedback
It is imperative criticism is delivered in a constructive manner. Judges are to be professional, courteous, and focus on the positive aspects of what a competitor did during the debate. Volunteer Judges should remember that the majority of the competitors do not progress beyond the Regional Final. It is therefore essential that judging is of as high a quality as

possible at this stage in the competition to give all participants a sense of achievement and the awareness of having learned valuable skills from their experience. Competitors will want to know what criteria they were marked on. Feedback is of two types: general and individual. The first must happen, the second can and should occur if time allows. General Feedback happens after you have deliberated on your decisions and returned to the auditorium and BEFORE you announce the winners. This is your chance to offer constructive feedback and advice to all of the participants. This is often done by dividing up the feedback areas between the judges, a division of labour that should be sorted out before the performances start. For example: 'We felt that teams were generally good at constructing strongly evidenced arguments, but at times needed to be more forthcoming with points of information. Whilst we judge on the basis of all four criteria, we felt that the difference between teams could be most keenly seen in the quality of listening and response'.