

ONLINE

Online WSDC 2020 Judge Training

These slides have been adapted by the WSDC Board, but all credit should be given to the Online WSDC 2020 CAP

Acknowledgements

This guide draws largely from the training materials developed by CAP of previous WSDCs (especially those of Thailand 2019 and Stuttgart 2016), building on their accumulated work. It also attempts to provide additional clarification on issues raised by judges and coaches in recent years.

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Characteristics of a model judge

The following are key characteristics of a 'model' judge

- **Impartial:** Doesn't judge teams they have a personal bond with (nation of affiliation, teams they have coached, etc.).
- **Unbiased:** Has no prior idea who is going to win the debate. They set aside their personal opinion about the motion or specific arguments. They don't expect teams to argue their preferred arguments or discount arguments they don't like. They judge the debate that happened before them.
- **Observant and diligent:** Listens carefully to what debaters say and doesn't construct ideas that haven't been explained well. They look for substantiation and evidence equally from both teams. They track arguments, responses, and POIs – and are able to fairly and accurately summarize the debate (not necessarily to the debaters, even just to themselves) before evaluating it.
- **Possessing general knowledge:** Take on the role of an average, intelligent listener and is aware of current affairs and basic facts without letting specialist knowledge interfere with the debate.
- **Expert on the rules:** Knows WSDC debating rules well and understands the words in the motion and the roles of teams/speakers.
- **Accountable:** Can justify their decision based on a sound understanding of issues in the debate and the criteria for judging.
- **Constructive:** Gives debaters constructive and concrete feedback after the result of the debate is announced.

Judges additionally have to observe the following protocol

- Being **courteous and respectful** to the teams and coaches
- Does **not allow coaches to make signs** or signals to debaters beyond time signals, and **maintains room decorum**
- Always makes themselves **available for feedback**
- **Pays attention** in rounds:
 - Not checking their phones
 - Taking good notes

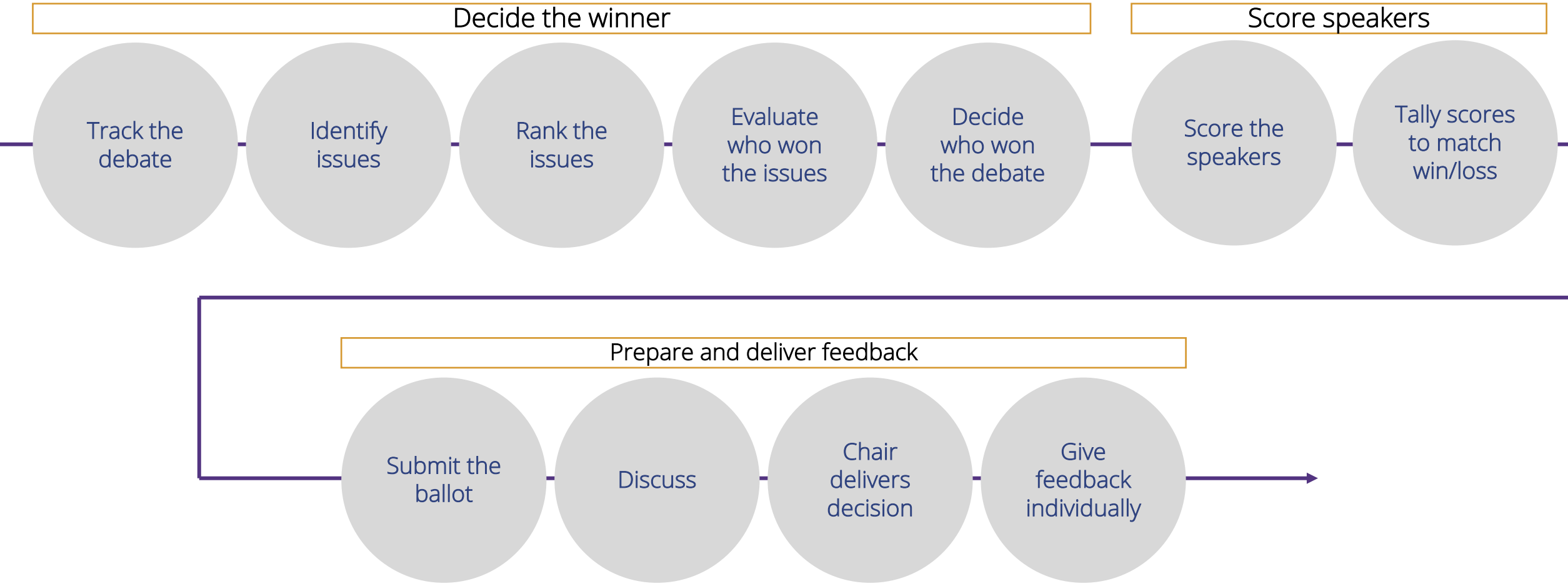
Avoid the following common missteps as a judge

- Using your extremely specific knowledge on a certain topic. A judge should never say:
 - “The proposition claimed that 1 million electric cars were produced in the UK last year, and it wasn’t attacked by the opposition, but since this is my field of expertise I know that the correct number is 39000 which is why the argument falls.” → adjudicators judge the debate as it happened.
- Assessing the content in the debate based on the arguments a team could have made. A judge should never say:
 - “I penalized you because you didn’t bring an argument about the economy, even though I think that is really relevant in the debate.” → adjudicators can not penalize teams for not bringing certain arguments. They can, however, give this as explicit feedback for teams to improve. Not as a legitimization of the call for the given debate.
- Assessing the content based on refutation the judge is able to think of against an argument. A judge should never say:
 - You explained your arguments about violence pretty well, but I thought of 3 different ways to rebut it which is why I penalized you on content. → Judges only take into account what has been said, not what could have been said in the debate.
- Filling in the gaps in analysis or rebuttal that a team has themselves
 - You tried to explain why this policy harms minorities, and even though you didn’t give the right reasons, I do agree with you that it’s an important argument because of reason X, Y and Z. This is why I awarded you on content. → Judges only take into account what has been said, not what could have been said in the debate. They can only give such advice during feedback for improvement purposes, if teams want to know how to make their argument(s) stronger, not as a justification of awarding marks.

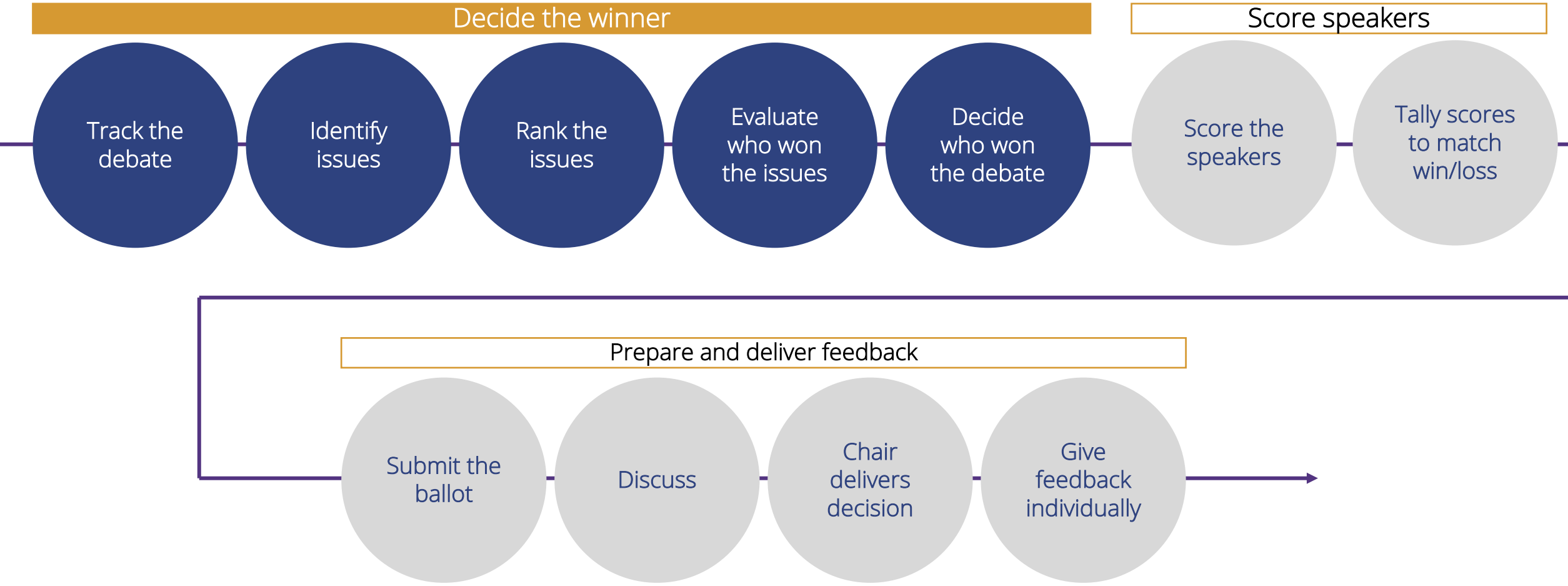


The judging process and marking

The judging process, end-to-end, looks somewhat like this



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Track the debate closely, and use your notes once the debate has ended to identify issues that will decide the debate as they emerged in the debate

- What are Issues:
 - Issues are often questions that help you decide whether a particular motion should pass
 - Teams will often outline issues themselves as the debate progresses
 - Examples – THW ban alcohol:
 - Is it a legitimate choice to drink alcohol?
 - Does banning alcohol reduce harms on drinkers and their families?
- It is important to identify and issues as they emerged in the debate, do NOT enter the debate and decide what issues should have emerged
 - If you believe that the issue of the economy is an important one, but it did not emerge in the debate, you cannot evaluate it based on this issue. You can however tell teams later on when you provide them constructive feedback AFTER the oral adjudication that it is an issue they could have considered in addition to their existing arguments

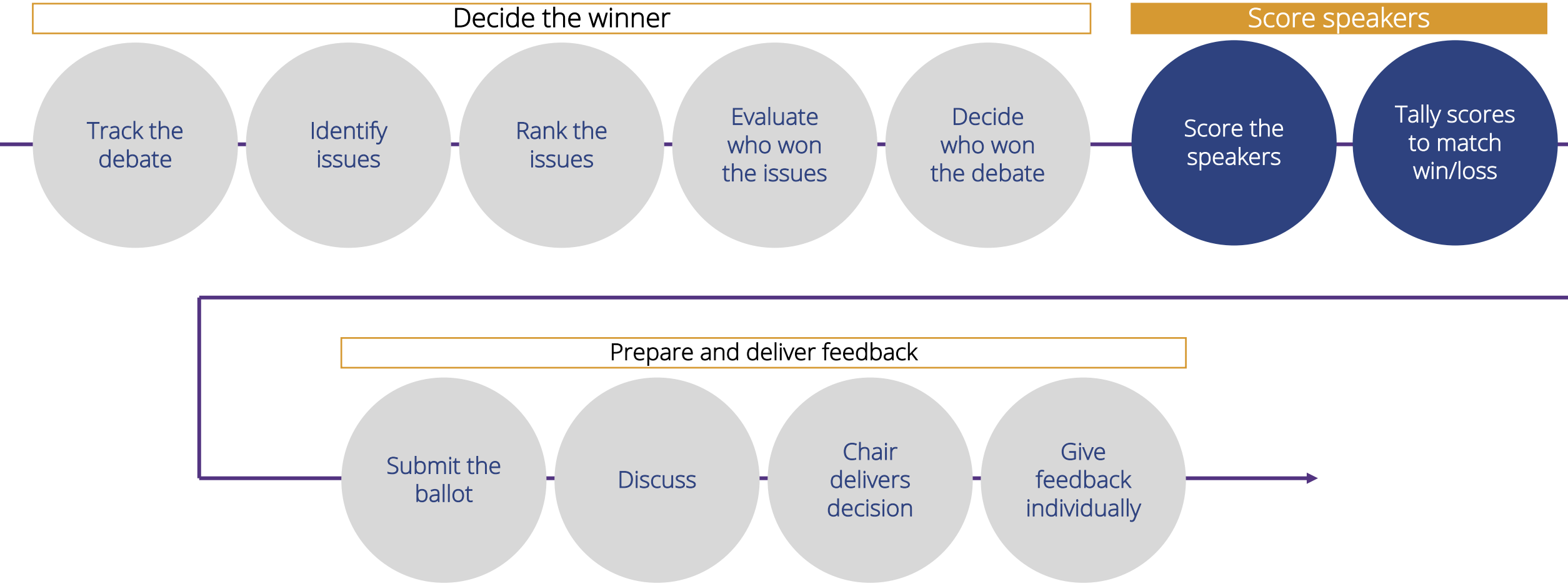
Remember that all the issues may not be as important as the other – you have to identify the issues that are more crucial to winning the debate than others

- What does ranking mean?
 - Deciding the importance of each issue in comparison with all other issues in the debate
 - This helps decide which issue is most crucial for a team to win in order to win the debate
- How to rank issues?
 - Time spent by teams on each issue
 - What did teams explicitly agree on as important? If that's not clear, then what did teams implicitly agree on as important? If that's also not clear, then the reasons given by teams on why a particular issue matters more than other issues (weighing). If there is no explicit weighing, ONLY then enter the debate to decide the ranking of issues (not as your personal self but as the average reasonable person we described earlier).
- Examples of Weighing:
 - Size of group impacted: More recreational drinkers than alcoholics
 - Extent of impact: Benefit to alcoholics compared to harm faced by recreational drinkers

Finally, evaluate who won the issues, and subsequently, the debate

- What does evaluating issues mean?
 - Comparing the contribution of the two teams on a given issue (arguments + rebuttal)
 - Deciding which team ultimately won the particular issue – was there important material that stood at the end that was unresponded to by the other side? Did the existing responses adequately take down the core of a point a team made?
- What does evaluating the debate mean?
 - Comparing the issues won by the two issues
 - Deciding which team has ultimately won the more important issues
 - Make use of the criteria for judging

The judging process, end-to-end, looks somewhat like this



Mark the speeches after deciding win/loss; the winning team should always have a higher score

- Content, Style and Strategy are the criteria used to review the performance of each team and assess scores to each speaker. Rather than rigidly seeing them as discrete elements when determining speaker scores/which team won, these three areas should help a judge understand what team did a best job during the debate overall, i.e. which team won the debate.
- What is the relationship between this marking guide and your judgment / decision?
 - The speaker scores are a mathematical expression of your decision and they help you evaluate individual performance of speakers
 - For example, if you write down your speakers' scores and when calculating the totals they indicate that team A won but you honestly think team B should win because they were overall more convincing and did a better job, then you should review the scores you've awarded as your decision and the final scores should not contradict themselves.
- Style: 40% (40 points) → 24 – 32 pts; Content: 40% (40 points) → 24 – 32 pts; Strategy: 20% (20 points) → 12 – 16 pts.
- SUM: 100 points ⇒ 60-80 pts. Marks for reply speeches are halved.
- Points of Information – a modifier of up to +/- 2. This cannot push the Total Score outside the 60-80 points range
- Half marks are the lowest fraction allowed.
- Average speech is 70 (28, 28, 14)
- No low-point wins, no draws. This means you cannot give a win to one team, but give the other team more speaker points. You cannot award a draw either as a result or score speakers such that both teams end up on equal scores. You can award the highest speaker score to someone on the losing team, but the total team score of the winning team must be higher than the total team score of the losing one.

Each speaker's score is broken down into three, mutually-reinforcing categories

Content (40%)

- Deals with WHAT is being presented.
- Evaluates the quality of content as if they were written down.
- Covers arguments, rebuttal, content of POIs and responses to POIs.
 - Quality of analysis (missing logical links or logically structured? → claim, explanation, example, conclusion)
 - Quality of examples (broadly applicable or cherry-picked? generalised or personal anecdotes?)
- Even if the material is not explicitly flagged as rebuttal, it may be responsive to the other side's material (could be a style problem, but the content should be credited)
- If an argument or rebuttal is weak / poorly developed, it is generally a content weakness

Style (40%)

- Style deals with HOW the content is presented, and remains an important component of debating online. Whilst some aspects of good style 'in-person' are difficult to judge online, the core components of 'intelligibility' and 'persuasiveness' remain central.
- There are many variants of good style: consider whether the speech made a positive impression beyond strictly the quality of the argumentation or strategy.
- Bad style typically hinders the intelligibility or persuasiveness of the argumentation offered, and could include mumbling, shouting too loudly, or speaking too quickly to be understood.

Strategy (20%)

- Deals with WHY content is said
- It's the sum of choices that a team makes in order to win a debate.
- Includes:
 - Interpretation and relevance of the motion
 - Time allocation
 - Structuring of the speech (prioritization)
 - Consistency between arguments and speeches
 - Points of Information

These categories are important:

- Improve standardisation if we think along the same lines and provide the same weight to the categories
- Easier to explain to teams
- Helps guide our own thinking while judging

Good content plays out across arguments, examples, and rebuttal primarily through the quality of their analysis

Good analysis across:

Arguments

Merely stating a consequence v. explaining why it is a consequence and its impact

Examples

Stating overly specific, irrelevant examples v. explaining relevant persuasive examples

Rebuttal

Misrepresenting and then attacking v. attacking the actual argument
Stating an argument is false v. using logical steps to disprove it

What is good analysis?

- **Rigorous Logic:** Links made, conclusion cleanly derives from assumptions
- **Relevance:** Decided on by the teams, and what they make relevant to the debate
- **Relative Importance:** Why is this argument important in the world/in the debate?
- **Tracking Evolution:** Responding to responses, adding new illustrations/language

How should knowledge of good analysis affect judge behaviour?

- A good judge never takes what teams say they have proven at face value; always check if they actually did so! Be wary of a team that brandishes claims.
- Labels can be misleading
- Saying why something is important is not the same as proving that it happens.
- Bad analysis that has not been rebutted still stands, but it is **STILL POOR CONTENT** and should be reflected in the scores
- Bad rebuttal to a well-constructed point signifies engagement but is **STILL POOR CONTENT** and should be judged accordingly.

The following is a rough guide you can use while marking content

Mark	Standard
24 - 25.5	Speaker has used unsubstantiated claims, which had major logical leaps or were internally inconsistent. Little to no use of evidence, examples or an explanation. Speaker's material does not engage with the opposing team's.
26 - 27	Arguments and rebuttal derive from plausible premises but lack sufficient explanation. Instead of deeper analysis and credible examples, speaker would likely just rephrase the claim or conclusion in a different way. Examples are presented but not usually rigorously explained/tied to the claims being made. Examples are not usually proven to be plausible in a majority (or significant majority) of cases.
27.5 - 28.5	Arguments are mostly well explained, with some logical gaps. Evidence such as statistics or historical examples from the real world are present, but only occasionally. Weaknesses of opponent's arguments are exposed and analysed. Rebuttals mitigate opponents' arguments but do not necessarily defeat them.
29 - 30	Most arguments are backed up by deep and compelling analysis, with regular use of very credible examples. Sophisticated responses to the most arguments of the opponents, including engagement with opponents' examples and evidence.
30.5 - 32	Well explained arguments supported with highly relevant and credible examples that are shown to be applicable in a broad range of cases. Rebuttals were developed against the strongest versions of the opponents' arguments and significantly damage the opponents' case. Speaker demonstrates how their team's specific arguments and rebuttal come together into a bigger picture.

Despite the nature of online debating, whether a speech is clear, easy to follow, non-repetitive, interesting, and persuasive can be ascertained

Style is about:

Body language (if applicable)

Pace of speech

Volume and tonal variations

Choice of vocabulary (too technical or too lay?
Emotive or dry?)

Eye contact maintained, or fixated on notes? (if applicable)

Style is not about:

- x The foreign-ness or familiarity of an accent, or about the perceived harshness or pleasantness of an accent. A speaker's accent should never be consideration when scoring for style.
- x Immutable characteristics of an individual's voice - for example, a speaker should not be penalised for having what is perceived to be a harsh vocal tone or pitch.
- x The format that speakers choose to organise and deliver their speech. For example, it is not about whether speakers use palm cards, or sheets of paper. It is also not about whether speakers choose to sit in front of their device whilst speaking or stand further away. These considerations should not affect style scores.

Debaters for whom English is a second language shall be judged as if they were native English speakers. This means that the same evaluative metrics should be used for all speakers regardless of language status. Speakers who are not native English speakers should not be given additional credit for debating in a foreign language or be penalised if their grasp of English is not perfect.

However, it is important to bear in mind important variances across internet connections speakers may have

- It is to be expected that some speakers may not have access to a strong and stable internet connection, and therefore may not be provide a video stream of their speech. Speakers should be encouraged to appear on video, but when this is possible or practical, judges should not apply a style penalty simply because they cannot see the speaker. Instead, style should simply be marked on the basis of what the judge can hear. The audio of a speech may still include many components of good style, including, but not limited to; varying their tone, speed, or volume for effect, using pauses effectively, using effective rhetoric or wording.
- It may also be possible that speakers experience short periods¹ of 'lag' or frozen audio streams, and some of the speech may not be transmitted. Although this technically affects intelligibility, speakers should not be penalised for instances where the internet connection momentarily rendered their speech unintelligible, and this is not an example of bad style.

(1) For instances where long periods of down-time occur during a speech, see the protocol described on the following slides

The following is a rough guide you can use while marking style

Mark	Standard
24 - 25.5	Speaker is mumbling or barely speaking. It can also mean that the speaker is so quiet (or loud) that it prevents any chance of hearing the arguments. This would also apply in cases where speaker uses undue profanity or is being excessively aggressive.
26 - 27	Speech pattern is choppy and/or there's overuse of verbal crutches (e.g. "uhm"). Speaker needs to be reminded to speak louder (or more softly). Speed of the speech is too fast paced to comprehend substance of the argument or too slow to retain the focus of the audience.
27.5 - 28.5	Speech has a natural speed to it with occasional unnatural breaks or pauses. Speed of the speech may be slightly above average speaking speed, but can be easily understood.
29 - 30	There is a natural flow to the speech. Words are chosen in a way so as to be most effective when explaining the argument while engaging the audience on an emotional level. Some minor flaws may be evident, but they do not interfere with the flow of the speech.
30.5 - 32	Speaker modulates their volume and speed in a way that adjusts to the debate room and accentuates certain parts of the speech. Speaker uses pauses to allow the audience to digest the argument without losing their attention or to emphasise a point.

Good strategy can be independent of good content, and is intrinsically tied to good engagement

- Strategy points are awarded when a speaker identifies and addresses the right issues in the debate, even if they don't analyse these issues very well. A judge should not say:
 - I penalized you on strategy because even though you addressed the right points of rebuttal, you didn't manage to fully rebut them.
→ In this case you award a speaker on strategy and penalize them on content.
- A team should always engage with their opponents. If their opponent's bring a weak argument, it is still important to rebut that argument. A judge should not say:
 - It was really clever that you didn't engage with argument X, because it was a very poor argument, so you didn't have to spend any time on it. → It would be good strategy to spend little time on rebutting the weak argument, but it would be poor strategy to ignore it, unless there is specific need to devote more time to other issues in the debate.

The following is a rough guide you can use while marking strategy

Mark	Standard
12	Speaker barely spoke (less than 4 minutes) or went significantly over time limit (more than 45 sec). Lack of structure is so severe, that it impacts audience's ability to comprehend the arguments. Arguments were barely relevant. Speaker ignored most of the opposing team's arguments or conceded them.
13	Speaker left a chunk of the speaking time unused or went quite a bit over time. Audience had to focus intently to follow the structure of the speech, which made it harder to fully grasp the presented arguments. Some arguments were relevant, though simplistic or easy to challenge. Some central arguments of the opponents are challenged, but some are missed.
14	Speaker used up the entire time of the speech with individual points that were clear enough to follow easily, even if not explicitly outlined by the speaker. Arguments were relevant or mostly relevant and rebuttals addressed the central issues in their opponents' case.
15	Individual points were identified by speaker themselves at the onset of the speech or before each point separately. Flow between various sections of the speech was mostly natural and most of the time was allocated to the more important arguments and rebuttals.
16	All points are identified clearly by the speaker and flow from one section to the other is effortless and easy to follow. Arguments address exclusively main issues in the round. Timing of arguments and rebuttal is carefully chosen to effect most damage. Arguments were put into broader context of the motion and debate itself.

Use the Point of Information adjustment column to reflect the impact of POIs in the round

- Track them: how many offered and how many accepted and what was said
- Useful way to think of POI adjustment column:
 - Everything that happens within the 8 minutes of a speech is marked within the 3 categories of Style, Content and Strategy.
 - Everything that happens outside is marked within POI adjustment column (if necessary).
 - Can grant or take away up to 2 further points
 - Remember that you cannot add two points where a speech is already excellent, and you cannot subtract to points where the speech is already below average. Pals

The highest mark you can give is 80 and the lowest is 60...

Standard	Overall (/100)	Style (/40)	Content (/40)	Strategy (/20)
<i>Flawless</i>	80	32	32	16
<i>Excellent</i>	76-79	31	31	15-16
<i>Very Good</i>	74-75	30	30	15
<i>Good</i>	71-73	29	29	14-15
<i>Average</i>	70	28	28	14
<i>Below average</i>	67-69	27	27	13-14
<i>Weak</i>	65-66	26	26	13
<i>Very weak</i>	61-64	25	25	12-13
<i>Improvement Needed</i>	60	24	24	12

Standard	Overall (/50)	Style (/20)	Content (/20)	Strategy (/10)
<i>Flawless</i>	40	16	16	8
<i>Good to Excellent</i>	36-39	15	15	7.5
<i>Average</i>	35	14	14	7
<i>Weak to below average</i>	31-34	13	13	6.5
<i>Improvement Needed</i>	30	12	12	6

The following is a rough guide you can use to sense check overall scores for constructive speeches (1/2)

Mark	Standard
60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is not relevant to the motion and what the team needs to prove. • All points made are claims, with no analysis, and are confusing. • The speech is hard to follow throughout, so it is hard to give it any credit.
61-63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few marginally relevant claims. • No analysis provided in the claims, which are mainly lines without explanation. • Parts of the speech are clear, but significant parts are still hard to follow.
64 - 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the points made are relevant to the debate. • Arguments / rebuttals are made with some explanation and analysis, but with significant logical gaps in the explanation. • Sometimes the speech is difficult to follow.
67 - 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the points made are relevant to the debate. • All arguments / rebuttals have some explanation, but it still has logical and analytical gaps in important parts of the argument and lacks evidence. • Mostly easy to follow, but some sections may still be hard to understand.
70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major shortfalls, nor any strong moments. • Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, although may fail to address one or more core issues sufficiently. • All arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps and some examples, but are simplistic and easy to attack. • Easy to follow throughout which makes the speech understandable, though style does not necessarily serve to make the speech more persuasive.

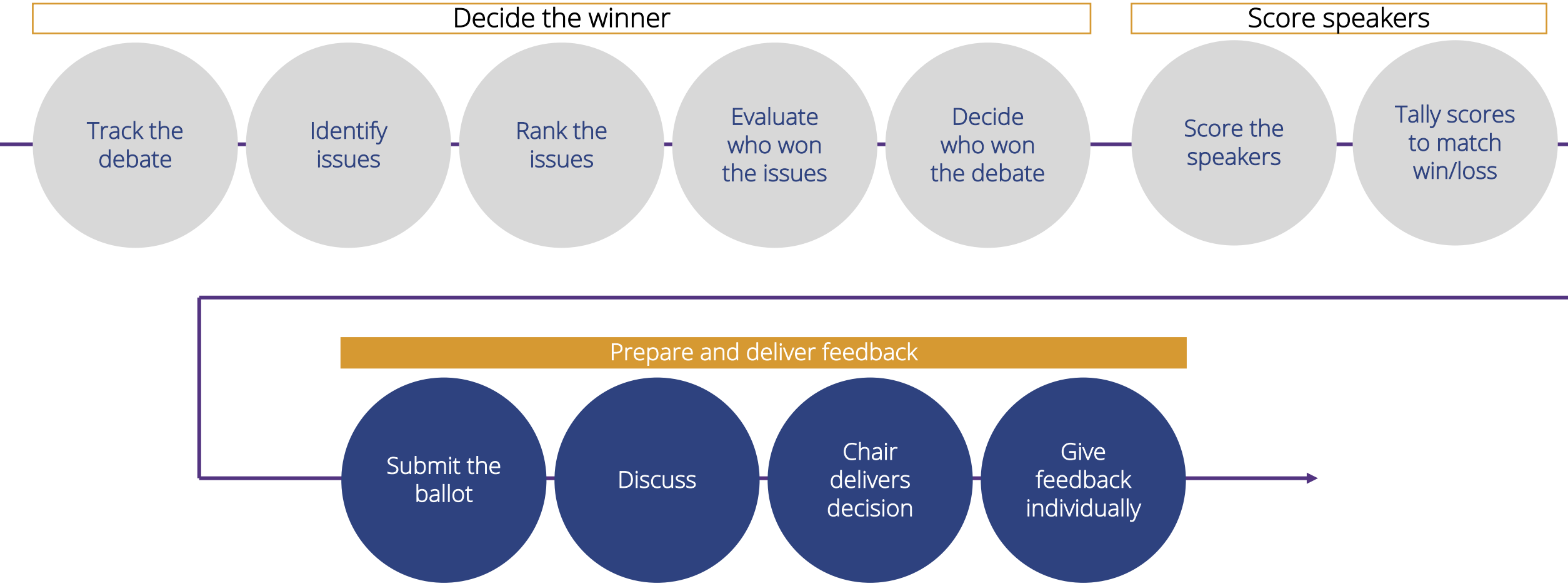
The following is a rough guide you can use to sense check overall scores for constructive speeches (2/2)

Mark	Standard
71 - 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arguments are all relevant, and address the core issues in the debate.• All arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps and most have credible evidence. Some points raised may have minor logical gaps or deficits in explanation.• Easy to follow throughout. On occasion the style may even serve to make the speech more engaging and persuasive.
73 - 76	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arguments are relevant and engage with the most important issues. Arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps.• Occasionally, the speaker provides more sophisticated and nuanced analysis, making their arguments hard to attack.• Easy to follow throughout. On occasion the style may even serve to make the speech more engaging and persuasive.
77 - 79	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arguments are all relevant and well-illustrated, and address the core issues in the debate, with thorough explanations, no logical gaps, and credible examples, making them hard to attack• Easy to follow throughout. The style serves to make the speech's content more engaging.
80	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plausibly one of the best debating speeches ever given in a schools competition.• It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.• Flawless and compelling arguments, made with outstanding delivery.

The following is a rough guide you can use to sense check overall scores for reply speeches

Mark	Standard
30	The speaker did not describe the debate as it happened. They misunderstood or misrepresented central arguments and responses.
31-34	Instead of actually identifying or analysing points of clash, speaker mostly just retold the debate as it happened or attempted to keep arguing for their side.
35	Speaker identified the major points of clash between two teams and was able to provide some basic justification for awarding the win to speaker's team.
36-39	Almost perfect overview of the debate. Particular interactions from the debate were analysed and used as evidence for awarding the win to the speaker's team.
40	Flawless analysis of the debate that just occurred. Speaker was able to accurately identify turning points in the debate (including the strongest arguments and rebuttal of their opponents) and why they their side wins on balance

The judging process, end-to-end, looks somewhat like this



Fill out your ballot independently, submit it, and then deliberate with the other judges in the room to know the decision and collect feedback

- 7 minutes to come to a decision and fill out the ballot individually
- 5-10 minutes to discuss decision with panel - everyone should be given a chance to speak; highlight points of agreement or disagreement so this can be reflected back to teams
- You can't change your decision after discussion among the judges begins
- If decision is unanimous or the chair is in the majority, the chair should deliver feedback; if the chair is dissenting, the chair has the option to appoint a panelist in the majority to deliver feedback

Keep the following in mind while delivering an oral adjudication (or even explaining your decisions to the teams separately)

- Announce the decision first: it affects your ability to deliver precise feedback otherwise.
- Try to keep it to 10 minutes or under. Do not disclose speaker scores!
- Walk them through the debate as you tracked and evaluated it:
 - Why are specific issues important in the context of this particular debate? Why?
 - Are these issues equally important, or are some more important than others? Why?
 - Which teams won on specific issues and why?
- Be comparative:
 - What points (e.g. points of argumentation, points of style or strategy) were more persuasive on the winning side
 - Explanation of strengths and weaknesses of teams has to always be comparative
- Be specific: Don't stop at generic phrases like ("provided more analysis", "were more persuasive", etc.) Instead, give specific points of reference where that was observable.
- Try to spend an equal amount of time on both teams
- Try to balance positive and critical comments if possible
- Choose your language carefully - no offensive comments, do not make fun of speakers, be respectful at all times.
- When explaining the decision, stick to what happened in the round. Offer suggestions for improvement later.

To ensure students have an educational experience do provide short constructive feedback to the teams at the end as well

- In this role, you are an educator and not just an unbiased judge.
- Provide suggestions for how you would have approached the motion / specific arguments or responses you might have run. This can be useful BUT IT IS NOT A NECESSITY and coaches/teams should not expect this from judges.
- Suggest to teams how to prioritise their material.
- Provide more in-depth feedback per speaker (what they did well, what they can do better in the next round)
- Adjust your feedback to the speakers (don't overload novices with complex comments, etc.)
- Do not single out speakers for doing poorly.
- Answer questions they may have