

## Chief Judge's Briefing Script for Area Contest

*The script below can be used for briefing Timers, Ballot Counters, Judges, and the Tie-Breaking Judge.*

*Most often, one Timer is briefed earlier in the contest room, while the other Timer can join in the Chief Judge's Briefing.*

*The Tie-Breaking Judge is always discreetly briefed alone before anyone else. One of the first items a Chief Judge should take care of at the contest is selecting and briefing the Tie-Breaking Judge. Ideally, the Chief Judge will arrive earlier than most others, so he/she can select and brief the Tie-Breaking Judge.*

*The content below can be read to the contest roles as a script.*

## Appreciation to All Contest Officials

First, I'd like to thank each of you for serving an important role in this contest. It takes a lot of help to run a contest, and we couldn't have this contest without your help. Thank you very much for helping.

## Overview

In this briefing, I'll cover what each role needs to know for this contest. I'll start with the briefing for the Timer role, then the Ballot Counter role, and finish with the Speech Judge role. To help the contest start on time, this briefing must be done swiftly, and I'll need your attention and cooperation throughout the briefing. However, if you have any questions, please ask.

## Timers

- Each Timer will record the time of each contestant in the timing forms I've provided.
- Each timing form will be for a separate contest. Each timer will complete 1 form per contest.
- When each contest completes, finish recording the time for the last contestant, then fold up the timing record/form and I'll stop by to collect the form from both Timers. Put your name on the top of the form so I'll know which form came from the Chief Timer, and which is from the Assistant Timer.
- For each contestant, start timing when the contestant utters his/her first word, or makes a gesture to the audience, indicating the beginning of the speech. When in doubt, give the benefit to the speaker, but please be consistent.
- Before each contestant starts, be sure the timing lights are off. To ensure this, reset the lights after each contestant completes his/her speech.
- If the timing lights fail, use the colored folders provided to you instead.
- Times for the contests are listed on the timing record form.
- For Evaluation (2-3 minutes):
  - Display the green light at 2 minutes.
  - Display the yellow light at 2 minutes, 30 seconds.
  - Display the red light at 3 minutes. The red light will remain on for the remainder of the contestant's speech.

- If an Evaluation contestant's time is less than 1 minutes 30 seconds, or if it exceeds 3 minutes 30 seconds, circle the time after recording it on the timing record form.
- For the International Speech (5-7 minutes):
  - Display the green light at 5 minutes.
  - Display the yellow light at 6 minutes.
  - Display the red light at 7 minutes. The red light will remain on for the remainder of the contestant's speech.
  - If an International Speech contestant's time is less than 4 minutes 30 seconds, or if it exceeds 7 minutes 30 seconds, circle the time after recording it on the timing record form.
- After each contestant finishes, except for the last contestant in a given contest, time for 1 minute of silence, and briefly turn on the green light, indicating to the Toastmaster that the 1 minute of silence has expired.
- After the last contestant finishes in a given contest, time for 1 minute and discreetly signal to me that 1 minute has passed. At that time, I'll stand in the back of the room, waiting to collect ballots and timing records.
- Also, during the intermission, time for the number of minutes planned for the intermission. When the intermission time has expired, let the Sergeant-at-Arms know.
- Time the contestant interviews if the contest toastmaster asks you to do so.

Are there any questions related to the Timer role?

*The Timers are now briefed and can return to the contest room.*

## **Ballot Counters**

- Ballot Counters will collect ballots from judges after the last contestant in a given contest finishes his/her speech.
- Before getting up to collect ballots, wait for me to stand (it'll be at least 1 minute). At that point, you can stand and join me in the back of the contest room. We'll stand there until the all judge's ballots have been completed. When all ballots are completed, then we'll make a single sweep to collect them.
- Please do not hover over judges who are completing their ballots. Give them time to complete their ballots. When we see that all ballots have been completed, we can make a single sweep through the audience to retrieve all ballots.
- When a judge's ballot is made available (when he/she holds it at his/her side, or a similar gesture), discreetly collect the ballot.
- When you've collected the ballots for all the judges you are assigned to collect from, bring the ballots to me.
- After all the ballots and timing records have been collected, we'll meet to count the ballots and determine the contest winners.

- Since you'll be involved in counting the ballots and determining the placement of each contestant, it's critical that you do not discuss the scores or placement of any contestant either during or after this contest.
- Once this briefing is complete, each ballot counter will pair up with 1-3 judges, and that ballot counter will be responsible for collecting ballots only from these judges. If we find that certain judges are seated closer to each other, then we can reassign amongst the ballot counters and myself once we get in the contest room. Please don't leave this briefing without knowing exactly who you'll collect from. This practice ensures that we collect all ballots efficiently and discretely.

Are there any questions regarding the Ballot Counter role?

## Judges

- Please read and sign the Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics forms provided to you. Give the signed forms to me.
- These forms certify that you are a Toastmaster in good standing for the last 6 months, that you've completed at least 6 CC manual speeches, and have met the other requirements in that form.
- Is any of you a member of a club with any of the contestants listed on the contest program? (**Area contests:** *If more than one judge is a member in a club with any given contestant, one of those judges will not be able to serve as a judge in this contest.* **Division contests:** *No judge may be a member of any club in which a contestant is a member.*)
- Is any of you currently competing in a contest, or planning to compete in a speech contest this round? If so, you won't be able to serve as a judge in this contest.
- You are to remain unbiased toward each contestant. Do not be influenced by a contestant's club, area, division, or experience in Toastmasters. Do not consider the contestant's age, sex, race, creed, national origin, profession, or political beliefs. Instead, focus only the factors found on the ballot for the given speech contest.
- Appropriateness: There've been some complaints at multiple contests about the appropriateness of some speeches in Toastmasters. Toastmasters is a professional organization, and we must preserve its good reputation. Speeches should not contain potentially offensive, off-color, or objectionable material. There is a section in the judge's guide for this, and deductions can be given for inappropriate speech content. Further, if you feel that speech content is more appropriate for a comedy club, bar, or some other setting, then it's ultimately your discretion and decision as a judge on whether that contestant should wind up on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> place on your ballot slip. However, please be consistent.
- On each ballot, print and sign your name. It's best to do that now since a ballot without a signature is invalid. Also, please read the back of each ballot.
- Your evaluation and judging of each contestant should be solely based on the presentation of this speech tonight. If you've heard a contestant speak prior to today, you should treat it as the first time you're hearing the speech. Prior performances are not to be considered.
- Do not be concerned with the time of each contestant's speech. Focus only on the factors listed on the guide and ballot. The Timers will record the time for each contestant, and I (the Chief Judge) will collect those records. Speeches that are under or over time will be dealt with through the timing records.

- As a judge, you are to support the contest rules and judging standards. Refrain from public criticism of the contest, and do not reveal the scores or ranking of any contestant. Please do not discuss how you voted in the contest.
- The judging guide and ballot contains a top portion that's a guide to score contestants with. Keep notes and scores in that portion. You may find it useful to start from the right-hand side and work to the left, so you can cover up the scores from previous contestants. The bottom portion of the form is the actual ballot. When the last contestant has spoken, fill in the bottom portion with your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place contestants (for tie-breaking judges, you must rank all contestants). You must break any ties. That is, there can be only 1 contestant in each place on your ballot. Otherwise, the ballot will be invalid and discarded.
- When you've completed the ballot, check that it is signed, and your name is printed on it. Place it in the provided envelope (do not seal the envelope), and hold the envelope at your side and wait for a Ballot Counter to discreetly pick it up. Be as discreet as possible. Based on your body language, the ballot counter will know that you've completed your ballot. Do your best to remain anonymous.
- Judges should not sit together (although this is unavoidable at times). Try to distribute yourselves out amongst the audience. However, to help the Ballot Counters discreetly collect the ballots, try to sit near an aisle or at the edge of a table if possible.
- When the contest is over, please either take the scoring sheets/guides home with you and destroy them, or give them to me so I can destroy them. Do not throw away the scoring sheets/guides here at the contest location.
- The speaking area will be communicated to you by the contest Toastmaster. If a contestant moves outside the speaking area, you may deduct points from the contestant. However, this is not a disqualifying violation.
- Protests can only be made by judges and contestants. All protests must be made to the Chief Judge or Contest Chair(s) before the contest results are announced. Protests can only be for 2 reasons:
  1. Eligibility
  2. Originality
- To lodge a protest, communicate it verbally (and discreetly) to me, or write "\*\*\* PROTEST \*\*\*" on the ballot. When I review the ballots, I'll see that a protest was lodged. At that point, the phrase "Mr./Madame Toastmaster: We'll take a little longer to finish counting ballots." will be announced in the contest room. If you hear this, please discreetly return to the briefing room (this location), where we'll review the protest and discuss it amongst each other. After discussing the protest, the contestant will be brought in to explain his/her thoughts. Then, the contestant will be excused from the briefing room, and the judges will vote (verbally or by ballot) to disqualify the contestant or not. A majority vote will determine the outcome.
- Prior to this briefing, I selected and briefed the Tie-Breaker Judge. He/she is only known to me, and he/she will not be in this briefing. The Tie-Breaking Judge's ballot will only be opened and used if there's a tie after counting all the other judge's ballots.
- Ballot Counters: Please look at the judges, and decide who will collect ballots from each judge once a given contest completes.

- Does each of you have a pen? Does each of you have a ballot and envelope for each contest? Are all ballots signed and do they have your name printed on them? Are there any questions?
- Please discreetly return to the contest room and distribute yourselves amongst the audience if you can. Please trickle out of this briefing room and into the audience (rather than all exit and enter at once).

(End of Chief Judge's Briefing)

## Briefing the Tie-Breaking Judge

The Tie-Breaking Judge should be briefed secretly. The briefing has the same content as the Judges' section, with some exceptions:

- You (the Tie-Breaking Judge) should have ballots specifically for the Tie-Breaking Judge. These ballots require you to fully rank all contestants for a contest.
- I will collect your ballots. Do not give your ballots to anyone but me.
- For each contest, you must rank all contestants on the ballot. For example, if there are 5 contestants in a contest, you must rank the contestants 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> on the ballot.