

## Proposed reforms to Easters selections procedures;

### The Problems of the Status Quo

- Selection is an inevitably subjective process that at some level must necessarily be arbitrary. Watching a single performance by a speaker offers no indication of many important factors in a debater's performance – e.g. a debater could be an excellent person to have in prep but put in an ordinary performance in a debate. This is especially the case where novice debaters are in question; the selection process is intimidating, the topics rely on basic factual knowledge that they may not possess, they may get put with a particular experienced speaker who gives them a brilliant case and artificially inflates their position. Others may wind up a strong novice speaker stuck in a weaker team and have their ranking artificially depreciated.
- The reality of Easters from the perspective of Macquarie is that there is a very minimal chance that most teams are going to break. In institutional memory, we've never broken more than two teams. Simultaneously we've too often found our teams at the bottom of the tab. Individuals report being put in teams with people they don't particularly like, and with experienced people who've no interest in training them. The clear purpose of Easters ought, therefore, be development and socialisation. Accepting that the purpose of Easters for most people is development seems at odds with a "meritocratic" selection process that misses much valuable information and creates teams badly adjusted to the goal of development.
  - People who have the greatest need to grow have the least capacity to do so because they wind up in the lowest teams; stuck in a downward spiral of adjudicators of decreasing quality of adjudicators, heavier losses and less constructive feedback. In such conditions, the capacity to develop is greatly limited and the cycle leads them to be among the lowest performing teams in the tournament. The effects on self-esteem and their attitude towards debating generally are likely to be unfortunate.
- Despite the foregoing, most experienced people tend to approach Easters as an explicitly competitive venture, at which their own performance relative to others is a significant factor. Such an attitude is ill-calculated to fostering the mentoring role needed for training the less experienced.

### Alternative Proposal;

1. Stage One – First Weeks;
  - a. Survey everyone at the very first internals;
    - i. Experience
    - ii. Area of study
    - iii. What news they consume/general knowledge?
  - b. Create a Google Document in week one with all the names of everyone at internals. All experienced people have to provide feedback about every speaker with which they had contact that week, either as a team mentor or as a judge. They must comment on;
    - i. Manner
    - ii. Quality of Analysis
    - iii. People they work well with.
    - iv. Their skill in prep.
  - c. The two internal selectors *must* make every effort to see every novice debate at least once.

- d. To be eligible for selection, experienced people must submit answers to the following questionnaire to the selection panel.
    - i. Introduction: mentoring requires adaptability, leadership, service, patience and communication. As a minimum commitment, you will be expected to attend one weekend training day and contribute at least one article to a communal matter file.
    - ii. Questions
      - 1. Tell us about your previous Easters experiences. What was good, bad, and why?
      - 2. Why are you interested in mentoring a team?
      - 3. Why do you meet the requirements for an Easters mentor?
        - a. What else can you bring to the mentoring role?
      - 4. What strategies would you employ to help novices develop?
      - 5. What experience do you have as a debater and how is it relevant?
      - 6. What experience do you have as a coach and how is it relevant?
      - 7. Which novices do you want to debate with and why?
2. Stage Two – Selection Day
- a. Novices debate together (i.e. no experienced people) in front of the entire selection panel. They are to be given a fact sheet in advance giving them the basic fact pattern to attempt to correct for the general knowledge bias. Novices will be ranked by performance but the rankings are to contribute only to the broader picture of that speaker's abilities and will not be determinate.
  - b. Experienced people debate together in front of the impartial selector only. Experienced people are not ranked but rather placed into a pool of possible people to attend Easters. From there, being put into teams is a matter of the selection panel's impressions (as moderated by the selection criteria – below) and the answers on the questionnaire.
3. Selection Process
- a. The panel
    - i. The panel will comprise two internal selectors, and one impartial selector. The two internal selectors cannot be debating at Easters and must put their names forward to the executive, together with their case for being chosen as a selector. The two selectors will be chosen by the executive in a secret ballot.
    - ii. The impartial selector will be selected by the externals officer.
  - b. Deciding teams.
    - i. The panel will decide teams with regard to the following criteria;
      - 1. Development.
        - a. Note: this is a streamed concept. High performing debaters are to develop as much as possible and thus would be put in a competitive teams. Less competitive debaters would be

put in a team that's likely to maximise their developmental capacity.

2. Leadership – experienced people
  - a. The impact that a particular leader is likely to make upon a particular team.
  - b. The benefit the leader is likely to derive from leading a team.
4. Teams will be formed, numbered by random number generator, and released to the society.

Benefits of the Alternative Proposal;

- The capacity to take a far more holistic approach to assessing debaters' abilities. A selection assesses a single performance in a debate. A panel of selectors permitted to use existing knowledge can draw upon a broad array on information about particular speakers.
- The capacity to put people in teams that better reflect their actual competencies, rather than their performance in a single debate.
- The chance to form teams better calculated to develop speakers.
- The chance to further change the culture of the debating society towards Easters away from a performance opportunity to a more service-oriented approach.
  - The chance to mandate particular behaviours from experienced people.