

## WHY NOT A NATIONAL TOURNAMENT?

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CEDA has succeeded to an extent far beyond the expectations of the seven persons who founded the organization in 1971. It is the largest division at many tournaments in the Western United States and continues to attract students who would not otherwise engage in college debate. Although CEDA's strength is still in the Rocky Mountain Area and the West Coast it continues to expand into the midwest and east. In spite of this success the organization must continue to be innovative in order to expand and grow. CEDA must now turn to an end of season national tournament.

Most tournaments are now assured sufficient entries to guarantee the advertised number of elimination rounds and the 1980 Desert Invitational at the University of Arizona broke to double octa-finals. The change to junior and senior divisions of CEDA has meant that many tournaments now offer elimination rounds in two divisions. This movement, to two divisions, must continue in order to overcome a growing concern among many who have supported CEDA over the years. As the organization matured many fine debaters entered the current year with three years experience and provided little educational value to the novice debater. Junior or Novice divisions will open opportunities for students who have little, if any, previous experience in debate.

The point system, although not always productive, has generally been good for the organization. There is ample evidence that the quest for points has

sometimes overshadowed the educational objectives of the organization. This is unfortunate, but it is a fact that for many students and coaches and, more importantly, for administrators who must be convinced to support the program a visible measure of success is necessary. The point system has made it possible for directors to provide tangible evidence that their debaters have achieved success during the current year. Although the point system is important and should be continued, it is in no way in conflict with a national year end tournament.

CEDA debaters are no different than other students who compete in forensics. They must be provided opportunities to compete with other students and must have some means of measuring success. There are many differences between CEDA debate and national topic debate and these differences must be maintained, but all debaters and participants in individual events must have the opportunity to prove that they are the best and receive rewards for their achievements.

CEDA was never intended to be non-competitive and certainly no one believes that CEDA debaters should ever give less than their best efforts in a round or in a tournament. CEDA was never intended, at least by this founder, to be less competitive, but only competitive in a different way and with a different style. CEDA debate was designed to emphasize skills in logic and reasoning and persuasive ability. It was and is designed to discourage reliance on sample cases full of evidence and to prevent debate from being an evidence reading contest.

CEDA participants must not lose sight of the objectives and goals of the organization, but neither should they be asked to be less competitive than their NDT counterparts.

The point system provides the opportunity for a school or a program to achieve success. The reports published by the Executive Secretary show the points achieved by each school that has entered a tournament, but never reflect the names of the individual debaters. Nothing in the reports indicates which individuals at a school contributed the points achieved to date. The value of a system which measures the performance of a program is not in dispute, but neither can it be argued that this is a sufficient reward for the individual team and this type of recognition is also needed. A national tournament should not replace or even lessen the importance of the current point system and a school which achieves success through point accumulation should be accorded the same respect as an individual team which is successful in a national tournament.

It is a myth that the point system favors the small program with a small budget. To finish in the top ten nationally requires a school to enter a minimum of two teams in several tournaments over the season. The successful school normally enters far more than the six tournaments required as a minimum. Schools with small programs can and do compete successfully in CEDA, but it is simply not true that the point system favors such schools.

A national year end tournament would offer many advantages to the CEDA organization. It would give recognition to individual teams and even to individual debaters if speaker awards were

given. It could enable a school with a limited program to achieve success if it had one excellent team; a success that cannot be obtained under the point system. It would give added incentives to schools, teams, and individuals who are not now utilizing the off topic to enter the CEDA division at tournaments. In every respect a national tournament would create additional interest and participation in CEDA.

A national tournament should be completely open to all interested schools and entry should be limited only by judging requirements. There should be no at-large bids or qualifying tournaments and anyone who wanted to enter should be permitted to do so. The entry fees should be minimal and the location of the tournament should be rotated throughout those areas which show the greatest interest and participation. In this manner even schools with very limited budgets could enter whenever the tournament was in their area.

A national tournament would not be in conflict with the goals of CEDA, either now or as they were envisioned by the founders of the organization. CEDA is not and was never intended to be a non-competitive type of participation. Although it may be desirable to have a system which rewards the small program, the current method of awarding points cannot and has not accomplished this. A national tournament would not and should not conflict with the current system of rewarding the success of the school in CEDA debate.

CEDA has enjoyed tremendous success and growth over the past ten years, but it cannot continue to grow and achieve greater success by standing still and patting itself on the back. The organization must continue to be innovative. A national tournament is needed to complement the current point system and to offer more opportunities for its participants.