

merely postponing the decision of what to drop for the 2NR, and that person is not as committed to the arguments as you are.

You probably didn't understand that, because you are too committed to the spread 'em technique of overburdening the 1AR. I realize it's the fashion, but it's also the reason you are getting the lousy ranks. You aren't playing a critical role in the debate -- why should you get better ranks than the one who is?

Dear Mr. Bump. I ran up against a killer bee affirmative at my last debate. I tried to run logical argument against the case, but all the judge would allow me to say was topicality without evidence. Has debate sunk so low?

Signed -- Evidenceless in Evansville.

Frankly, Ev, one of the real irritations of judging high school policy rounds is the failure of 1NC's to run anything but what he/she/it is programmed to run. Once again, that may be the current style, or strategy, but a friend of the 1N it is not.

So, how about this?

1NC observation on quality of evidence.

A. A critical dimension of debate is the quality, specifically the relevance, of evidence read into a round.

1. A policymaker would never choose a new policy based on irrelevant events.

2. The theory of prima facie insists that an affirmative be supported with critical evidence before it can be evaluated.

3. The test of a piece of evidence is whether it is specifically related to the claim.

B. This affirmative's evidence is incredible, in every sense of the word.

1. The solvency evidence is irrelevant to the plan.

2. Without solvency evidence, no affirmative should be debated.

C. Reject the affirmative as not prima facie. As soon as they try to read solvency evidence, realize that it is a tacit admission that the case was not prima facie, and vote!

D. Even if you don't believe this, please apply the standard as soon as the affirmative begins attacking our lack of evidence, as they must agree with the test.

Then, run some logical argument, and bait the affirmative into the no evidence response. Notice that the argument insists that a policymaker pay attention to it. Notice further that it can be adapted to a tabula rasa or a storytelling paradigm.

Will a judge like it? Well, you have nothing to lose but the loss.

Dear Gnat. I love cross-ex, but some judges go out and smoke during it. This somewhat dampens my enthusiasm. What should I do?

Signed, Second Hand in Seattle.

Dear Sex. Well, that all depends on whether you want to win the debate or not. Here's what I'd say as the next speech starts. But then, I don't have to win any debates anymore.

Observation: You should disqualify yourself as an incompetent judge.

A. Debate is a rational activity. It's roots are Platonic, and it's effects are widespread and lasting, such as your decision to stop smoking and come back in to listen to it.

B. You are irrational.

1. You walked out on the most critical part of the debate.

A. Cross ex is critical to understanding argument. (read ev.)

B. Cross ex is a source of stasis, which identifies the positions of each team. (read ev.)

2. Further, you walked out to smoke, which is not only irrational, but disgusting. (see the Surgeon General)

C. You have only two options.

1. Resign, and we'll go get a competent judge.

2. Vote for US, in recognition of the error of your ways.

D. Pre-empt. Unless the other side reads evidence denying the critical nature of cross ex, any decision in their favor is active proof of your incompetence. NO paradigm possibly allows any other decision.

Matt, you jerk. I smoke. I know where you live!

Signed, Arnold in Atlanta.

That's all the time we have for now. Au revoir. And send my mail courtesy of the Witness Protection Program.

(Bill Davis coaches at Blue Valley, (KS) and writes this regular Rostrum column.)

## NATTY BUMPPO'S DEBATE ADVICE

And now, Natty Bumpo's advice for the debate-lorn.

Dear Nat--

That's Mr. Bumpo to you.

Yeah. Right. I'm the first negative and the first affirmative, see? And I get the lower ratings every single time. And -- like-- it's no fair because I tell the jerk everything to say! But because he goes last, and gets to blow up the world, or save the world, or flip the judge's stomach, he gets all the credit. What can I do?

Signed, Low-ranked in Lubbock.

Dear Lowball. Yours is a common problem. It is primarily the fault of human nature, namely that whoever goes last is in the judge's mind when it comes to ballot signing time. It also is human nature to believe that your contributions outweigh your partner. In other words, maybe he IS better than you are.

But, you wanted advice, not criticism. Some thoughts on the first negative rebuttal:

1. Remember this speech is critical for two people in the room. One is the judge. The other is your colleague. She may be a bum, but even a bum needs to understand an argument before she can give it. So,

2. Signpost diligently. Your beloved pard has just sat down after eleven minutes on her feet. She will be less than fresh. To say "go to three" doesn't make much sense in the best of times, and this ain't one.

3. Impact slowly. Your 2NR should be able to flow it, too.

4. Pick and choose arguments. If you try to pull everything, you are