

# **NCFCA PHILOSOPHY OF JUDGING**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Many observers, coaches, and contestants have asked what kinds of judges NCFCA wishes to incorporate to adjudicate rounds of competition and the reasons why NCFCA supports certain types of judges. NCFCA has elsewhere published official league rules for debate and individual events, debate judging manuals, and judging instructions for individual speaking events. The main purpose of this document, however, is to offer a broader explanation of NCFCA's overall philosophy of judging. Furthermore, this document seeks to describe the types of judges that will best serve the NCFCA community, assist tournament directors in their efforts to find the best judges for league events, and give competitors a starting point for audience analysis. To accomplish these goals, this document will examine judge diversity within the NCFCA judging community, analyze strengths and weaknesses of various types of judges, and demonstrate that a balanced approach works well to develop competent Christian communicators who are prepared to reach a broad range of audience members.

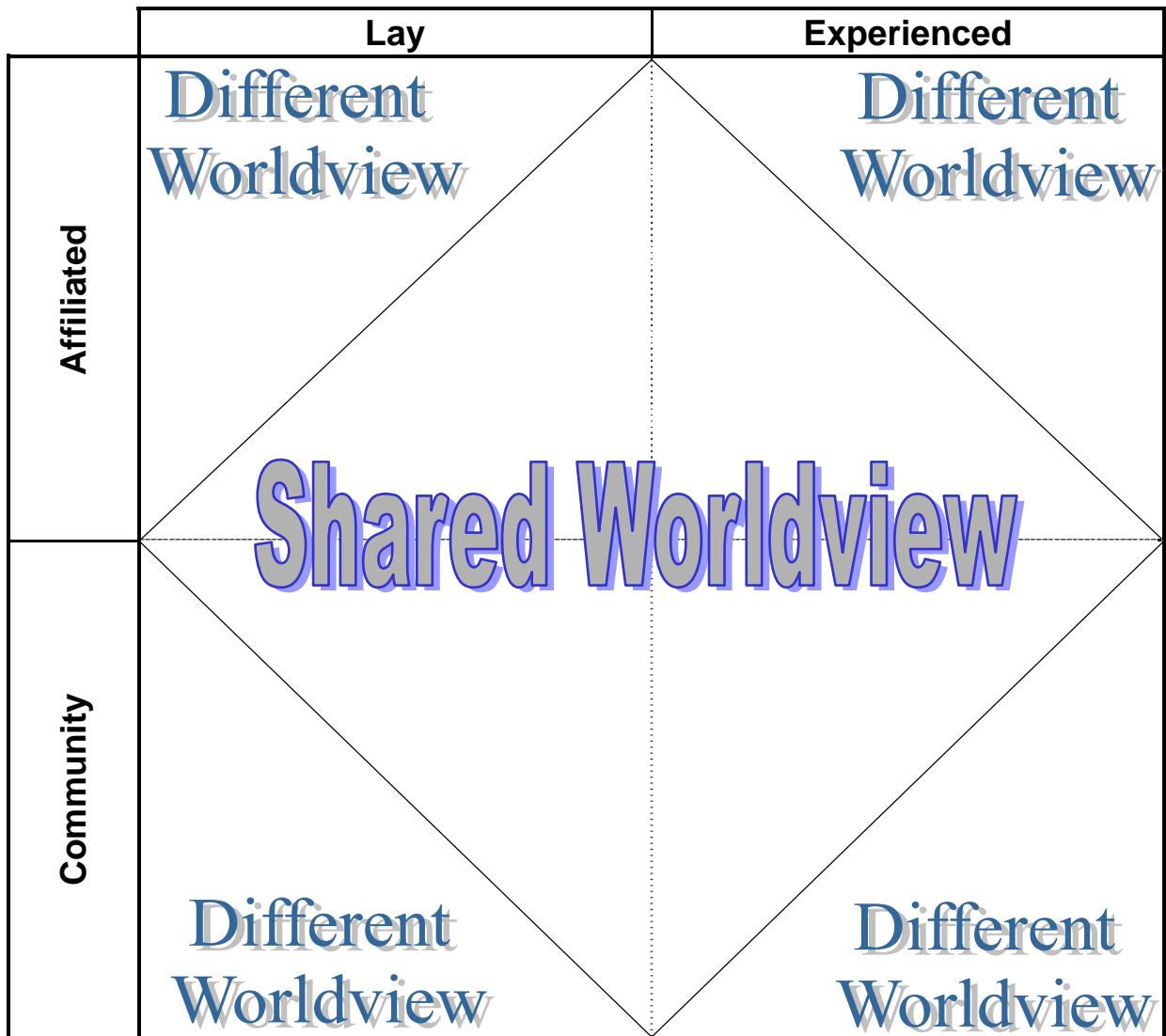
The diverse NCFCA judging pool includes experienced judges (both those with NCFCA experience and those from other leagues), lay judges, affiliated judges (e.g., parents and coaches), community judges, and judges with worldviews which are both similar to and different from those of NCFCA competitors. It is helpful to understand these different types of judges in the context of the Judge Matrix (see diagram).

Judges who are familiar with the goals of this league and the theory and practice of forensics may provide detailed critiques for competitors and thorough reasons for their decisions. At the same time, lay judges encourage competitors to become so adept at their particular skill that they can literally teach others and explain their position even to those with no prior knowledge of competitive speech or debate. Lay judges may also provide competitors opportunities to use the techniques necessary to explain and defend their worldview to audience members with different or opposing beliefs.

Judges from the community and judges who are affiliated with competitors also have important roles to play within the NCFCA. Within certain guidelines, NCFCA tournament directors can rely on the help of parents, coaches, and friends of competitors as well as members of the community in a manner that is fair and beneficial to all.

Competitors gain unique benefits both from judges who share their worldview and those with different worldviews, learning how to communicate with those who share their values as well as to persuade those who do not. Therefore, the NCFCA welcomes and values the participation of many different types of judges in league events.

# NCFCA JUDGE MATRIX



## **Introduction**

The academic activity of forensics is made possible by the hard work and dedication of many people, including the thousands of volunteers that agree to serve as judges for local, regional, and national tournaments. Since judges serve such a vital function, every parent, coach, and competitor cares deeply about the quality and kind of judges used at NCFCA competitive events. After all, it is the judge that determines the fate of every round of competition!

This document should help facilitate NCFCA communications events in two important ways. First, tournament directors can use the guidelines provided in this document to assist their efforts to coordinate the judging pool for league events. Second, competitors and their parents, teachers, and coaches can use this document as a starting point for audience analysis. When a competitor knows something about the judges, he can prepare to specifically communicate with those judges.

There are entire chapters in debate theory books dedicated to judging philosophies and audience analysis. Rather than wade into the deep philosophical waters contained in academic textbooks, this document will instead provide a working explanation of the types of judges that serve NCFCA and how each helps to accomplish the purposes and goals of NCFCA. Of course, it is necessary to first understand the purpose and goals of NCFCA in order to show how each judging type helps meet those goals.

## **PURPOSE AND GOALS OF NCFCA**

The NCFCA mission is *to provide a means for home schooled students to learn and exercise oratorical skills, addressing life issues from a biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God*. NCFCA seeks to provide opportunities for students to utilize a variety of skills in their communication efforts, including verbal skills, logic, critical thinking, research and study, emotion, and non-verbal skills (such as gestures and expressions). Each type of skill has a place in Christian communication and can be exercised in a godly manner.

NCFCA seeks to encourage students to use their oratorical skills in the real world as they have opportunity both in the present and in the future. Rather than focus on forensics as merely an academic activity or a game of maneuvers, NCFCA seeks to train students in skills that they can easily and directly apply to life. The goal of teaching life skills has led NCFCA to discourage the use of “speed and spread” techniques that focus on fast speaking and a multitude of arguments. Instead, NCFCA trains students to communicate in a conversational manner to a broad variety of people.

The vast majority of people one meets in the real world do not share a Christian worldview. Thus, one of the primary skills that Christian communicators must possess in order to reach a lost world is a thorough understanding of their own worldview as well as the worldview of those with whom they will be communicating.

Any Christian who has tried to persuade someone with a different worldview understands the frustration that stems from a lack of a common understanding about the world.

Christians today cannot assume that people will agree on any foundational assumptions, even that God exists or that He created the world. Training in competitive forensics helps participants to understand the foundational beliefs of others, understand their own beliefs, and then clearly communicate their worldview with those who share it and those who do not.

## **PURPOSE OF THE COMPETITION ROUND AND THE JUDGE**

The purpose of the NCFCA competition round is to test a student's communication skills. The round is controlled in order to give students the opportunity to polish their communication skills before they fully engage today's world in the battles and opportunities that lie ahead. At the same time, the competition round attempts to mirror real life as much as possible. The goal of this testing process is to increase the student's understanding and use of communication.

In order to test a student's skill, there must be a standard of measurement. The standard of measurement used within the competition round is the judge's vote. Therefore, competitors should view the round of competition as an oral test of the skills they have learned at home or in class. The judge then provides the results of that test with his vote.

Although friends and family can provide helpful feedback, communicating with only friends and family results in feedback that is too familiar and limited in scope, while a neutral audience can provide the kind of feedback that students are more likely to receive in the adult world. The NCFCA judge serves the function of a neutral audience who provides the standard of measurement for the round of competition. Competitors could view their judges as a sampling of the real-life audiences they may face someday.

## **JUDGE TYPES WITHIN NCFCA**

Although it is impossible to completely define every quality of every judge in any competitive arena, it is possible to look at NCFCA judges in three broad categories: forensics experience, affiliation with competitors, and worldview. Within each category, there are two mutually exclusive judging types. Within the category of a judge's forensics experience, there are those who have previous experience and lay judges who have no prior experience. Within the category of a judge's affiliation with competitors, he will either be affiliated with a competitor(s) or be a community judge with no (or limited) affiliations. Within the category of a judge's worldview, he will either have a worldview similar to that of the competitor or he will have a worldview that differs from the competitor.

The following definitions label each judging type according to the three categories mentioned above. Refer to the Judge Matrix as a diagram of these characteristics in the judging pool.

### **Forensics Experience**

*Lay Judge:* A judge with no previous forensics experience

*Experienced Judge:* A judge who has previous experience as a forensics competitor, teacher, coach, or judge; this includes judges with NCFCA experience and judges with experience from other leagues

## **Affiliation**

**Affiliated Judge:** A judge who is affiliated with a competitor as a family member, coach, or friend

**Community Judge:** An individual from the community who has no affiliation with competitors

## **Worldview**

**Shared Worldview:** A judge who shares the competitor's worldview

**Different Worldview:** A judge with a worldview that is different from the competitor

It is important to note that every judge will fall into one of the two types within each category. The Judge Matrix helps to illustrate the possible combinations within each category. It is possible to assign at least three characteristics to any NCFCA judge. For example, an individual who falls into the box in the upper left corner would be an affiliated lay judge with a worldview that is different from that of the competitor. A person who falls into the box in the bottom far right corner would be a community judge with forensics experience and a worldview that is different from that of the competitor. The upper left hand corner of the same box would represent an experienced community judge with a similar worldview to that of the competitor. Each characteristic will affect the way an individual judge views and decides a round of forensics competition.

## **JUDGE TYPES AND JUDGE BIAS**

In modern culture, the word “bias” has acquired many negative connotations. One example of bias might be someone in the media intentionally spinning a story to reflect a particular philosophy, even when the facts would suggest otherwise. Another illustration of the modern understanding of bias might be one person judging another on the basis of his race or religion. Indeed, many people say that they strive to be “unbiased” in their opinions and judgments in order to avoid these kinds of negative actions.

However, the historic, and perhaps more accurate, understanding of the word “bias” is much different. A bias is inherently possessed by every individual. It is impossible for human beings to be entirely unbiased.

Noah Webster defined the word “bias” in his 1828 dictionary as follows: “A leaning of the mind; inclination; prepossession; propensity towards an object, not leaving the mind indifferent; as, education gives a *bias* to the mind.” According to this definition, a bias is merely a tendency toward a certain direction. Since human beings do not learn in a vacuum, a multitude of life-factors will incline a person's mind in a certain direction. For example, a baby born into an English-speaking family will be biased toward the English language. A Christian is biased toward biblical truth. Neither of these are bad; nor can people rid themselves of their faith and their language when they enter the speech or debate round.

This historic understanding of the word “bias” helps illuminate the fact that all judges are biased and that these biases are not inherently bad. The following section will discuss general biases which affect judging. All of these types of judges compliment one another and together provide broader benefits than any one type can provide alone.

## **BENEFITS OF EACH TYPE OF JUDGE**

One of the main reasons that NCFCA encourages the inclusion of different types of judges is to allow competitors to learn how to persuade different types of people. The different types of judges illustrated by the Judge Matrix, along with the unique benefits and limitations of each type, are reviewed here.

### **FORENSICS EXPERIENCE: EXPERIENCED JUDGE V. LAY JUDGE**

#### **Benefits of Experienced Judges: Debate**

Experienced judges are often familiar with the theory and the issues the debater is attempting to use in the round. Judges hear competitors at a variety of skill levels. Novice debaters may struggle to articulate arguments or appropriately incorporate debate theory. The experienced judge can listen past the debater's inexperience and make sense of the arguments.

Experienced judges can often provide helpful and educational critiques that point out specific areas for improvement. Therefore, although his primary role is that of a neutral audience who provides the standard of measure for the round, an experienced judge can also fulfill the secondary role of a teacher who can supplement a competitor's debate education.

Judges who have become familiar with debate, particularly those with NCFCA experience, can help to enforce league rules and guidelines. They are also in a much better position than the lay or community judge to address improper conduct and inappropriate speech.

Judges who are familiar with the topic are the most likely to catch, and help to correct, more serious infractions such as falsification or fabrication of evidence.

#### **Limitations of Experienced Judges: Debate**

An experienced judge is generally familiar with the theory and many of the issues raised in a round, so, he is often able to mentally fill in the gaps when the debater fails to make logical connections. Although this ability is helpful in one sense, the ability to understand confusing elements of the debate also limits an experienced judge's ability to give a layman's opinion. What makes sense to the experienced judge may not make sense to the lay judge. Thus, an experienced judge often does not demand clear, common-sense communication that any audience member could understand.

Since an experienced judge is familiar with debate jargon, he is able to "listen faster." The experienced judge can understand what a debater is saying even if the speaker talks too quickly for an untrained ear and uses technical terms that don't make sense to the general public. This results in what has been dubbed "speed and spread" debating in which debaters speak very quickly, making many more points than the average audience member can follow. Debaters are not required to adapt their speaking style for general audiences when they speak exclusively in front of experienced judges and will speak more and more quickly because the judges can keep up.

Judges with experience from other forensics leagues often have a different model of debate. While this can broaden the thinking of debaters and their coaches, it can also introduce strategies and behaviors which are inconsistent with NCFCA's mission.

Experienced judges are often affiliated with competitors. This is more fully addressed under the category of Affiliated Judges; however, this characteristic very often influences the bias of the experienced judge.

### **Benefits of Experienced Judges: Individual Events**

The experienced judge is often able to provide more specific and beneficial comments and critiques on the ballot. These judges are many times parents, coaches, or alumni competitors who understand the benefit of the constructive ballot.

The experienced judge has appropriate expectations. He has seen what high school forensics competitors can do and is able to offer suggestions to assist both novices and experienced competitors in raising the bar.

Judges who have become familiar with Individual Events, particularly with NCFCA experience, can help to enforce league rules and guidelines. They are also much more likely to address improper conduct and inappropriate speech.

### **Limitations of Experienced Judges: Individual Events**

Experienced judges are often affiliated with competitors. While this is addressed under the category of Affiliated Judges, this characteristic very often influences the bias of the experienced judge.

Experienced judges can sometimes develop personal preferences and opinions about different speech categories by which they then judge competitors. This might be viewed as unfair by some, until one is reminded that all audience members arrive with their own opinions about the topic at hand and personal preferences about styles of communication.

Experienced judges sometimes have misinformation which is difficult to correct because they are experienced. While the lay judge wants to receive instruction in their role, the experienced judge may believe they have all the information they need to judge. This limitation can generally be overcome by asking all judges to attend at least a brief orientation to present rule changes and clarify issues.

### **Benefits of Lay Judges: Debate**

One of the primary benefits provided by lay judges is their ability to bring the perspective of the general public into the round of competition. With lay judges, debaters get a chance to practice their skills in front of the kinds of audience members they are most likely to address in their adult lives.

Lay Judges are often unaffiliated. While this is addressed under the discussion of affiliated judges, it is an added benefit of incorporating the lay judge.

The lay judge requires debaters to explain foundational concepts and theory using persuasive skills to make convincing arguments. This benefit is provided as a direct result of the fact that lay judges tend not to be predisposed toward case structures or debate theory.

Lay judges require debaters to not only argue for their positions, but also to explain the philosophical foundations of those positions in ways that the average listener would understand and appreciate.

Lay judges require debaters to use common language in their communication efforts. Although an experienced judge can try to ignore the use of jargon, it is impossible for him to forget what the terms mean. Nothing forces a competitor to restrict the use of technical language like a person who is completely unfamiliar with such terminology. Using common language additionally requires that competitors arrive at a deeper understanding of debate theory and the issues at hand. This skill also stretches debaters to communicate with those of differing backgrounds and beliefs.

Lay judges force competitors to speak at a rate that is easily understood by the average listener. The judge who has been listening to arguments on the topic all year long can “listen faster” and follow abbreviated jargon. Lay judges need the debater to slow down and explain the arguments.

### **Limitations of Lay Judges: Debate**

Lay judges are more likely than experienced judges to lack confidence in stepping into the judging role. Most NCFCA tournaments try to instill confidence by orienting judges to the debate experience. However, lay judges can sometimes come out of a brief orientation session, having perhaps skimmed over a judge’s manual as well, and be more confused about their job than when they knew absolutely nothing.

*Note:* The confusion of judge training for lay judges is significantly reduced when tournament directors and judge orienteers have a careful and planned approach to orienting lay judges. Judge orientation is addressed briefly later on in this document and is discussed at length with practical helps and suggestions in the NCFCA Judge Orientation Guide [\[link\]](#).

Lay judges are sometimes characterized as more likely to base their decisions upon emotion than reason. However, the history and tradition of forensics indicates that there is little evidence for this concern. The majority of lay judges do a good job and reach decisions for many of the same reasons as experienced judges. Additionally, society is filled with people who base their decisions upon emotions at the expense of reason and morality. These are the very people that our debaters will need to persuade. (Actually, experienced judges have been known to make emotionally driven decisions too.)

Lay judges may not be able to give detailed comments for speech competitors. Remember that the lay judge's vote alone serves the primary purpose of providing a standard of measure for the round. The vote alone tells competitors if their speech

persuaded one member of an average audience. But most lay judges are also able to give some measure of response and a reason for their decision. Many spend even more time than experienced judges writing detailed notes on the ballot.

### **Benefits of Lay Judges: Individual Events**

Lay judges bring a fresh perspective. Experienced and affiliated judges have often been listening to the same speeches for several tournaments in a given season. The lay judge hears the speeches with fresh ears. This offers speakers new and insightful feedback.

The lay judge is unencumbered by forensics rules and guidelines. We often think it is important that judges know the rules. However, the lay judge is not thinking about the rules; they are focused on effective communication. They will decide what they think is funny, or dramatic, or persuasive. Real-life audiences do not critique performers or speakers based upon years of training and checklists of skills. Instead, they give a gut-level reaction. Lay judges are able to provide this intuitive perspective to our students and thus prepare them for the types of audiences they will face in the future.

One of the primary benefits provided by lay judges is their ability to bring the perspective of the general public into the round of competition. With lay judges, speech competitors get a chance to practice their skills in front of the kinds of audience members they are most likely to address in their adult lives.

Lay judges are often unaffiliated. While this is addressed under affiliated judges, it is an added benefit of finding and incorporating the lay judge.

### **Limitations of Lay Judges: Individual Events**

Lay judges may not be able to give detailed comments for speech competitors. While most lay judges try very hard to give helpful feedback on the ballots, they are often still processing what they have experienced and are unsure just how to record it.

Lay judges take longer to complete their ballots, requiring extra time to be built into already tight tournament schedules.

Lay judges are more likely than experienced judges to lack confidence in accepting the role of judge. Tournament Directors usually try to instill confidence by orienting judges to the competitive speech experience. Lay judges can come out of a brief orientation session, having perhaps skimmed over the judging instructions, and be more confused about their job than when they knew absolutely nothing about speech competition.

*Note:* The confusion of judge training for lay judges is significantly reduced when tournament directors and judge orienteers have a careful and planned approach to orienting lay judges. Judge orientation is addressed briefly later on in this document and is discussed at length with practical helps and suggestions in the NCFCA Judge Orientation Guide [\[link\]](#).

## **AFFILIATION: AFFILIATED JUDGES V. COMMUNITY JUDGES**

### **Benefits of Affiliated Judges**

Affiliated judges are the most available judges. It is because of their affiliations (parent, coach, older sibling, friend) that they are the most available for the competition experience.

Affiliated judges can and should serve as judges for practice tournaments and informal events in which their students are competing. These events are usually more informal than national qualifying competitions. Parents and coaches are logical candidates for judges at informal events since many of them have experience and will already be present at the event. A side benefit of using the affiliated judge is that the judge gains more understanding about communication and is more equipped to help forensics competitors improve outside of competition.

Affiliated judges, especially those who have been around for awhile, know NCFCA's mission. These judges can reinforce league goals, guidelines, and policies.

By definition the affiliated judge knows the competitors. Parents get to know their children's friends and club mates. Coaches get to know their own students and those in other clubs. The affiliated judge knows and cares about the progress of the competitors and cultivates a nurturing environment for all competitors.

### **Limitations of Affiliated Judges**

The use of affiliated judges can foster misunderstanding and resentment between competitor families. NCFCA encourages tournament directors to refrain from paneling judges who are affiliated with competitors to judge national qualifying events in which their students are competing. This general guideline, although not a part of any official league rules, does help prevent the resentment that is frequently fostered by those who question the fairness of affiliated judges adjudicating rounds in which their own competitors have a lot at stake. Even though there is usually little evidence to warrant accusations that parents or coaches have intentionally voted to give their students some kind of advantage, the perceptions of others and the appearance of wrongdoing are enough to warrant a decision to avoid this practice altogether. When competitors advance to outrounds in national qualifying competition, it becomes especially important to consider the affiliations of judges.

Affiliated judges need to avoid the appearance of conflict, especially in high level competition and national qualifying competition. Affiliated judges should judge national qualifying tournament outrounds in events in which their students are not participating. For example, if a parent has a child in team debate who has broken to outrounds, it would be better for him to judge a Lincoln Douglas outround.

Affiliated judges have additional constraints. While community judges can be paneled with any of the competitors, affiliated judges need to be carefully placed to avoid the obvious affiliations, some of the potential conflicts previously discussed, and competitors they have already judged as the tournament progresses. Judges should not

judge the same debater(s) (at least not on the same side of the topic) or the same speaker giving the same speech at the same tournament.

### **Benefits of Community Judges**

NCFCA affiliates have derived tremendous benefits from networking within their communities to recruit judges. There are many places to find community judges. This category of judges might include members of community groups such as Toastmasters, Lion's clubs, Rotary clubs, Optimist clubs or other civic organizations; professionals with communications experience such as pastors, lawyers, judges, and teachers; business professionals; homemakers; local church members; and college students.

The recruitment of community judges is a great public relations tool for home schooling, forensics, Christian education, and our youth. These judges leave our events impressed with the caliber of youth and quality of communication they have observed and often write complimentary testimonials, thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Community judges are not affiliated with competitors. There is no appearance of favoritism or bias, regardless of how they adjudicate a given round. Because community judges have no constraints, they are easy to panel in the tournament.

Community judges help tournaments run smoothly. Tournaments have two concrete requirements: rooms and judges. Given enough rooms, the most common roadblock to running a tournament on time is the lack of adequate numbers of judges to keep the tournament moving. A pool of community judges will keep any tournament moving.

### **Limitations of Community Judges**

Community judges often, though not always, fall in the category of lay judges as well. See the discussion of limitations of lay judges.

The greatest limitation of the community judging pool is the time and effort it takes to coordinate it. However, those who have invested the time have reaped all the benefits described above and can say that it has been time well spent.

## **WORLDVIEW: SHARED WORLDVIEW V. DIFFERENT WORLDVIEW**

### **Benefits of Judges with a Shared Worldview**

The benefit of judges with a shared worldview is that they are able to appreciate the godly skills that parents, coaches, and league directors seek to instill in competitors.

Judges who share the same worldview are able to critique competitors based upon a Christian worldview. They often point out when they believe comments, arguments, or speech content is inconsistent with biblical thinking.

## **Limitations of Judges with a Shared Worldview**

The most obvious limitation of judges with a shared worldview is that they are unable to remove their bias toward a Christian worldview. This means they often readily accept jargon, ideas, and presuppositions that those from other worldviews would not. This acceptance does not require the speaker to support his position.

Judges with a shared worldview will sometimes take mental shortcuts, arriving at conclusions speakers did not intend to make. Speakers and debaters are not expected to fully explain themselves when basic beliefs are presupposed and content which was never developed is assumed by the judge.

With a homogenous judging pool in the area of worldview, speakers and debaters develop an exclusive communication style, unaware that their speech is likely to exclude many future audience members.

## **Benefits of Judges with a Different Worldview**

Judges of differing worldviews allow young communicators to broaden their thinking and speak in ways that reach a broader range of audience members. They learn to change their methods without changing their message and to analyze their audience to communicate effectively on any topic and for any purpose.

Judges with different worldviews offer competitors the opportunity to communicate with and persuade people of other faiths and beliefs. Many NCFCA participants have shared reports of how members of the community have been impressed and in some cases won over by interacting with Christian teens.

Judges with differing worldviews require speakers and debaters to fully explain arguments, issues, and positions without the benefit of shared presuppositions. Young competitors also learn that much of what they have assumed was universally accepted may instead be challenged; thus, they are given opportunities to defend their beliefs.

## **Limitations of Judges with a Shared Worldview**

Of course, the apparent limitation of judges with different worldviews is that they cannot provide feedback based upon a Christian worldview and may not fully appreciate the rules and principles of NCFCA. However, tournament directors and the NCFCA Board of Directors are the final authority on matters of rules and guidelines and can fulfill the necessary roles in this regard.

Judges with different worldviews may also penalize competitors who espouse beliefs and values which conflict with their own. The judge orientation process can often help to mitigate this concern. In the end, however, the experience of speaking to a judge with a different worldview has taught many competitors to refine their communication style in order to get their message across in a less offense manner.

## **JUDGE ORIENTATION**

NCFCA encourages the use of judge orientations in order to make lay judges feel comfortable adjudicating the round, inform judges from other leagues of the unique NCFCA mission and rules, and to ensure that experienced judges from within the league are equipped with the latest information.

The primary purpose of the orienting the lay judge is to help him relax and feel comfortable using the common-sense skills he already possesses to judge the round. Since the theory of speech and debate is grounded in common-sense principles that most people intuitively understand, the average adult should be capable of judging forensics competition without specialized training.

When orienting judges from other leagues, a special emphasis can be placed on explaining the unique qualities of NCFCA. For example, NCFCA encourages a conversational style of speech and debate that is not often followed in other leagues. There are other specific distinctions between NCFCA and other leagues that are further discussed in the NCFCA Judge Orientation Guide [link].

Judges who have gained their experience from within the league also benefit from an orientation, especially for national qualifying tournaments. Many times, particular judging issues come up during the season that can be answered in the context of a judge orientation. It is helpful to have everyone on the same page at the beginning of the tournament.

## **CONCLUSION**

Consideration of the common characteristics of judges within NCFCA reveals a pattern: the benefits offered by each type of judge compliment one another so that students can participate in the full spectrum of benefits. The experienced judge offers what the lay judge cannot, while the lay judge offers what the experienced judge cannot. The community judge is free to judge events that the affiliated judge cannot, while the affiliated judge is available to judge at events that the community judge cannot. Judges with a shared Christian worldview offer a biblical perspective to students, while judges with different worldviews offer students a unique perspective. A student's exposure to a broad variety of audiences supports NCFCA's goal to produce godly communicators who can speak effectively to average people of any background or belief system.

An understanding of judge types within NCFCA and the purposes they serve only helps to enhance the overall benefits of NCFCA competition. Tournament Directors who carefully consider the benefits and limitations of each type of judge will be better able to make wise decisions about who should judge at their tournaments. Students and coaches would do well to consider the types of audiences they are likely to face in competition rounds in order to tailor their speeches to most effectively communicate the truth of their message to that particular audience. Whether a student wins or loses, when he understands that the purpose of the judge is to help him learn how to communicate to the real world with all its various challenges and varieties of people, he can begin to appreciate the life skills that NCFCA competition encourages.