



LFYFC Debate Rules

Issued September 2025

1. Organisation and Teams

- 1.1. Clubs may enter one or more teams. Each team must consist of 3 members – a proposer, seconder & supporter. All must be members of LFYFC and be 26yrs of age or under on 1st September of the current competition year.
- 1.2. If a Club only enters ONE TEAM, the team need not be constituted of the same members for each round/heat.
- 1.3. If a Club enters MORE THAN ONE TEAM, point No. 2 will still apply, BUT members ARE NOT ALLOWED TO INTERCHANGE BETWEEN TEAMS. This will result in disqualification.
- 1.4. Only 2 teams will compete at each event.
- 1.5. The Management Committee is responsible for the dates and times of all events. The Committee is also responsible for arranging a venue for the Semi Final and Final of the competition. The 'home team' is responsible for arranging a venue for each home round of the Competition.
- 1.6. Each team will play 3 preliminary heats. At the conclusion of the preliminary heats, the 'for' and 'against' marks will determine the teams who participate in the semi-final. The teams successful at the quarter-final will qualify for the semi-final to then decide the final competing teams.
- 1.7. Should a team have no opponents in a match, they will be awarded an average of the marks from the other two matches in the preliminary heats.
- 1.8. Competing Clubs are welcome to supply suitably worded motions to the County Office.
- 1.9. If a team does not consist of three members it shall NOT, under any circumstances, compete.
- 1.10. Should a team arrive without a properly constituted team, the offending Club will either be awarded penalty marks or be disqualified.
- 1.11. If teams are unable to make their arranged heat they must comply with the following:
 - a) A team wishing to cancel a round MUST contact the Judge, Chairman and opposing team no later than 4.00pm on the day of the heat. In the event that none of these are contactable, the team must get in touch with the County Office (mobile number) or the County Chairman and leave a message on the Officers Messenger group
 - b) The team wishing to postpone a heat will be allowed 5 days following to rearrange, ensuring the opposition, Judge and Chairman agree on the new dates. The team that causes the re-arrangement will be given a penalty of ten points. Should an alternative date not be agreeable then the withdrawing team will be awarded zero and the other team will be awarded an average of their two other heat scores. County Office must be kept up to date of the postponement and subsequent arrangements.
 - c) If a heat cannot be held due to weather or other reasons, it will where possible, be held at a later date, determined by County Office. If it cannot be rearranged and is declared as "OFF", each team shall be awarded an average of their two other heat scores.

2. Officials

The following Officials are appointed by the County Federation:

- 2.1. The **Chairman** is to arrive at the venue at 7.45pm and is responsible for recording the full names and membership numbers of the competitors on the score sheet. They are in charge of the debate. They will act as the timekeeper and determine any penalty marks for late arrivals etc. After introducing the Judge and the teams involved, they will read the rules and announce the motions, which have been selected by each team.
- 2.2. The **Judge** is to arrive at 8.00pm and will be seated in the audience. Their decisions regarding the marks awarded are final and cannot be questioned by team members or the audience. After each contest the Judge will return a clear and readable photo of the score sheet to the County Office either by email (county.office@lfyfc.org.uk) or WhatsApp message (07599 361935).

3. Procedure

- 3.1. Team members MUST report for 7.45PM.
- 3.2. All mobile phones must be switched off before the start of the event. Mobile phones cannot be used for timing during the debate or in preparation.
- 3.3. The only preparation aids that may be used are dictionaries and thesauruses.
- 3.4. There will be a toss of a coin to determine which team will choose to propose first.
- 3.5. The teams will select their motions within 5 minutes. They will then have 15 minutes to discuss and prepare their arguments.
- 3.6. Teams will be seated each side of and facing the audience.
- 3.7. The Chairman will state the motion that is to be discussed.
- 3.8. After the first motion has been debated, there will be a 15-minute break for both teams to prepare for the second motion.
- 3.9. Open Debates, controlled by the Chairman, will involve all members of both teams. During the discussion, a team member's contribution will be 1 minute maximum, but a member can make several contributions within the allotted time.
- 3.10. At the conclusion of the debate Competition, the judge will announce the results and offer constructive criticism.

4. Timing

Timing must be strictly adhered to, and the speaker must address the Chair. The Chairman's control of the contest is FINAL and cannot be contested by any team member.

PROPOSER/OPPOSER may speak for up to 5 minutes.

SECONDERs may speak for up to 2 minutes.

THE OPPOSER sums up - 2 MINUTES

THE PROPOSER sums up - 2 MINUTES

OPEN DEBATE – 10 minutes maximum or at semi-final & final - 12 minutes maximum.

5. Score Sheets

3 score sheets will be completed per event; a copy for each team and a copy for the judge to submit. The results will be submitted at THE END OF THE EVENING, the Judge will return a clear and readable photo of the score sheet to County Office either by email (county.office@lfyfc.org.uk) or WhatsApp message (07599 361935).

6. Penalty Marks and Disqualification

- 6.1. Team members must report for 7.45pm and any team or part thereof arriving LATENESS will be penalised by ONE MARK for EVERY MINUTE they are late. Only the team which is late shall be affected by the imposition of penalty marks and in no way should the opposing team benefit from a team's lateness. So, the non-offending team shall be awarded the actual difference (plus or minus as appropriate) scored in the contest, whilst the offending team shall be awarded the actual difference less the penalty marks imposed.
- 6.2. Failure to comply with the rule (Point 3.2) will incur penalty points. If any phone are found to be switched on or used for timing during the debate or preparation, will result in penalty marks or disqualification, at the Judge's discretion.
- 6.3. Failure to comply with the rules around cancellation and postponement (Point 1.11) will result in a minus score of one more than the highest difference in that particular heat and one point being deducted from the Involvement Award.
- 6.4. Although members of a club's team can change, if a member interchanges between teams this will result in disqualification from the competition.
- 6.5. Incomplete teams will be disqualified.
- 6.6. The Chairman of the event will decide on penalty marks, which will be entered in the appropriate space on the official score sheet. Penalty marks are to be deducted from the team's total score before the result of the contest is announced.

7. Marking

Proposition

SPEAKER	25 marks
SECONDER	15 marks
OPEN DISCUSSION	30 marks
SUMMING UP	15 marks
ABILITY TO HANDLE THE DEBATING MOTION	15 marks
 TOTAL PER MOTION	 100 marks

Opposition

SPEAKER	25 marks
SECONDER	15 marks
OPEN DISCUSSION	30 marks
SUMMING UP	15 marks
ABILITY TO HANDLE THE DEBATING MOTION	15 marks
 TOTAL PER MOTION	 100 marks

8. General

The Federation, through the Management Committee and County Officers, has the sole right to the interpretation of the rules, the arrangements for the competition and the settling of any problems or difficulties that may arise.