
Chief Judge

Role and Responsibilities

What is a Chief Judge?

The Chief Judge at a Toastmasters speech contest acts as a compliance officer. The Chief Judge's primary responsibility is to ensure that the speech contest is conducted fairly, in accordance with all rules established in the **current** year's Toastmasters Contest Rulebook.

What Does the Chief Judge Do?

According to the Speech Contest Rulebook, a Chief Judge:

- Appoints and counsels the functionaries: voting judges, ballot counters, timers, and a secret tiebreaking judge.
- Conducts the briefing for voting judges, ballot counters, and timers.
- Acts as the chief ballot counter.
- Communicates with the Contest Chair should the contest need to be paused.
- Oversees consideration of all protests by judges or contestants.

Appoints and Counsels the Functionaries

- Oversees selection of judges to ensure that they meet the qualifications and exclusions set out in the Contest Rulebook.
- This requires a full understanding of the Contest Rulebook by the Chief Judge.
- See especially Section 1: Speech Contest Policy, Section 2: Eligibility, Section 3: Selection Sequence, Section 5: General Procedure, and Section 7: Protests and Disqualifications.
- Also study and know the sections of the rulebook covering the specific contest(s) being conducted.
- Follow the Chief Judge's Checklist (pp. 29-30 in Contest Rulebook).

Conducts the Briefing for all Functionaries

- Distribute all pertinent materials (ballots, reporting forms, certifications of eligibility, etc.)
- Instruct all functionaries on the protocols that apply to their roles.
- Review the Judge's Guide and Ballot and the speaking area.
- Review the protocol for handling any protests.
- Brief the Ballot Counters on use of the Counter's Tally Sheet.
- Review the Time Record Sheet and Instructions with Timers.
- Determine that the Timers have adequate timing devices and that they know how to use them accurately.
- Brief the Sergeant(s) at Arms on their duties (especially for Evaluation and Table Topics contests).

Acts as the Chief Ballot Counter

- Assist in collecting ballots from judges as discreetly as possible.
- Verify that all ballots are valid (signed and include choices for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places).
- Enter all judges' choices for each contestant.
- Compute totals for each contestant.
- Check the Timer's Report for any disqualifications.
- Refer to the Tiebreaking Judge's ballot in case of any ties.
- Complete Form 1168 Results Form (Important – this tells of any disqualifications for time and lists results in reverse order as they are supposed to be announced).
- Following the contest, complete Form 1182 Notification of Winner and convey it to the contest chair for the next level contest.

Oversees Consideration of all Protests by Judges or Contestants

- Protests are limited to eligibility, originality, and reference to another contestant's speech.
- Protests can only be lodged by a judge or a contestant, and not from audience members.
- Originality is defined in Rulebook Section 4D.
- A contestant whose speech is under protest must be given an opportunity to meet with the voting judges to satisfy their concerns or questions.
- A majority of the voting judges must concur in a decision to disqualify based on a protest.
- All decisions of the judges in protests are final.

See Rulebook Section 7: Protests and Disqualifications

Communicates with the Contest Chair as Needed During the Contest

- Establish a signal with the Contest Chair (and Contest Toastmaster) to indicate a need to pause the contest
- Announce clearly when all the judges' ballots have been collected for counting.
- Convey the results to the Contest Chair using the Results Form.
- Determine that the contest results have been accurately announced.
NOTE: Because all results are final once the contest is adjourned, any error **MUST** be called out before adjournment.