THE DIVIDED 2AR

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L/D Debate Demands

These days Lincoln-Douglas debaters are being asked to do more with less. Students are expected to cover an increasingly large number of diverse individual arguments while, at the same time, drawing out a few central issues. Particularly on the affirmative, after striving to cover the "line-by-line" in four minutes, the second affirmative rebuttal is expected - in three minutes - to "crystalize voting issues" while remaining true to the "flow debate." Meeting both of these important, yet often opposing, demands requires us to consider new 2AR strategies.

The Second Affirmative Rebuttal

The second affirmative rebuttal is currently limited to a select few popular strategies. Some students still attempt to "go down the flow" and discuss each argument in the scant amount of time allotted. Most coaches and competitors in the community have rejected this strategy because there is too little time to perform such a daunting task in the last speech. The most common approach is for the affirmative debater to review a few "voting issues" in the waning moments of the debate.

This voting issues approach does a poor job of meeting the two opposing demands placed on Lincoln-Douglas debaters. **First,** the voting issues approach obviously does not cover the flow. The vast majority of arguments are not mentioned in the summary of the debate. Some of these positions may be duly omitted because they bear no significance in the round, but other important ideas are overlooked by whim or error. **Second**, the voting issues approach

is often a poor way to summarize the debate. There are few, if any, standards to determine which arguments are "voters." Many debaters choose which issues to highlight based on instinct. Some competitors have very good argumentative instincts, but others do not. At any rate, "instinct" is an awfully nebulous method of crystalizing the round.

New Approach to Second Affirmatives

These shortcomings warrant new approaches to the second affirmative rebuttal. A community comprised of so many creative minds should easily be able to come up with as many formats for the 2AR. One different option is the "divided 2AR." This perspective, if executed well, offers some benefits over traditional approaches. Of course in competitive debate no framework is perfect, and the divided 2AR is no exception.

In this scenario the second affirmative rebuttal would begin by evaluating the negative case. Ideally, the debater would compress the negative side into two positions. The situation could either be that at the end of the debate only two negative arguments remain relevant, or it could be the case that all of the negative arguments fit into two broad categories (e.g. individual rights and governmental legitimacy). The affirmative debater would preview these main points and then discuss how/why s/he wins these issues. The 2AR should endeavor to spend thirty seconds on each point or a minute on the entire negative side of the debate. Then the rebuttal would progress to the affirmative side of the flow. There too the affirmative case would be condensed into two topics or categories of topics. After a preview, the affirmative would spend thirty seconds capturing each issue or a total of one minute on the affirmative side of the round. At this point, theoretically, the affirmative is winning four major issues in the round. Then, with the last minute, the 2AR truly weighs or crystalizes the debate. The competitor writes the ballot for the judge by explaining how these four arguments relate to one another and to the

rest of the debate. In other words, the debater answers the judge's hypothetical question, "In light of your capturing these four arguments, why should I affirm the resolution?" During a divided 2AR at its best the judge should be able to write down, word for word, the last minute of the rebuttal as his or her reason for decision. In other words, the affirmative debater should be spending the last minute of the round saying precisely what s/he wants to read on the ballot during the trip home.

Bridging the Gap

Despite its name, the divided 2AR seeks to bridge the gap between the competing demands that debaters face. **First**, it provides better line-by-line coverage. In the first two minutes the rebuttal umbrellas all of the little issues in each case under a few general headings. This process is more efficient when one looks at each side of the round separately. While there is not enough time to repeat the thirteen reasons that the affirmative is winning a given issue, such a reiteration of the 1AR is unnecessary. A prepared competitor would be able to use those thirty seconds to explain the larger story that those thirteen little reasons tell about why s/he has captured a given issue. **Second**, the divided 2AR offers a more cohesive summary. By breaking the time down per minute competitors can keep themselves on track based on basic hand signals from the time keeper. Cramming each portion into a thirty second span will limit debaters to the big picture. That way they do not get bogged down in the minutia of the first voting issue and glaze over the rest. **Finally**, this approach reserves time for true crystalization. A common complaint among judges (myself included) is that we have to intervene, to an extent, because no one told us how to weigh the issues in the debate. Dedicating a minute to that very mission will force competitors to switch places with the judge and think about what a ballot in their favor would look like. Group discussions could center on how to weigh specific combinations of issues on a specific resolution. Debaters should practice this

last minute in rebuttal drills.

Changing Demands

As Lincoln-Douglas Debate evolves the demands on competitors are changing. 2AR strategies must change to meet these new challenges. The divided 2AR is one way to address the tenuous twin burdens of the flow and the big picture. It is a strategy that debaters should carry in their arsenals. They should, at the same time, be willing and able to execute a number of other strategies as the situation demands. It is time that we, as a community, stop thinking of debate speeches as templates that we plug new material into every two months. Such frameworks are valuable instructional tools, but advanced debaters must conceive of their thirteen minutes as a blank canvas on which to paint whatever message will persuade that audience at that time.

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