

ANNOTATED OR NON-ANNOTATED? WHAT EXACTLY IS ALLOWED IN EXTEMP PREP?

**by
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As an extemp official at the National Tournament for the past few years, it has become increasingly apparent that the rule regarding what material is allowed in the extemp prep room needs clarification. I am referring, specifically, to Article X, section 4 of the national tournament rules and procedures located in the NFL National Manual. The rules are stated very clearly.

4. *Preparation:* As soon as a topic is chosen, the contestant shall withdraw and

One would think that the issue here would involve online citations. The rise of the internet has certainly had a dramatic affect on forensics research and poses a myriad of issues involving citations and allowability (see NFL Appendix V). But, surprisingly, material printed from the internet has not been the source of the increasing number of violations documented in the prep room.

The real problem is one that has been around far longer than the personal computer and the "wired" generation. I am referring to the problem of written or prepared material including old speeches, notes, and annotated indexes. This past year in Portland, Oregon the problem of illegal material became so widespread that a speech was given between the second and third rounds in both the US and Foreign prep rooms clarifying the rules and offering a ten minute amnesty period in which extempers could disclose and dispose of "contraband" material. In the foreign prep room a second garbage can was brought in to accommodate the amount of discarded material during the amnesty period. While the majority of discarded material was previously written speeches, a variety of other questionable material surfaced. It is this material that I would like to focus on in this article.

....."Leave all handbooks and brief books outside the prep room as long as the rule against their use remains in the NFL Constitution."

prepare a speech without consultation and without references to prepared notes. Students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers, and journals or articles therefrom, provided:

- A. They are originals or xeroxed copies of originals.
- B. Original articles or copies must be intact & uncut.
- C. There is no written material on original or copies.
- D. Topical Index without annotation is allowed.

No other material shall be allowed in the extemp prep room other than stated above. Extemp speeches, handbooks, briefs, and outlines shall be barred from the extemp prep room. Underlining or highlighting on materials will be allowed if done in only one color on each article or copy. No electrical retrieval device may be used, but printed material from "online" computer services may be used. Source citations of such material must meet MLA standards. (See NFL Appendix V)

First and foremost, it seems that today's extemper either does not understand the term annotated or is simply disregarding the rule. Again this year, multiple magazine indexes surfaced with annotated material. Any description of an article that is not the title, author, source, topic area, sub-topic area or page number is considered an annotation. Usually the problem occurs in a spreadsheet where a competitor will include a brief description of the article in a separate column following the title of the article or in lieu of the title. The annotation will help clarify the content of the article.

This practice may seem a benign bending of the rules to the average extemper, or even common practice to others, but such material is in fact illegal and will constitute a disqualification from the National Tournament. For those of you still confused, take a look at the following examples:

Annotated Example

	Column 1 Topic	Column 2 Title	Column 3 Description	Column 4 Source	Column 5 Date
Article 1	N. Korea	Encounter in Pyongyang	Focuses on the problems involved in reconciliation	Economist	6/17/00
Article 2	Germany	Deal-clinching Germany	Closing of various negotiations including slave labor under Nazis, threatened strikes, and phasing out nuclear reactors	Economist	6/17/00

Non-Annotated Example

	Column 1 Topic	Column 2 Sub-topic 1	Column 3 Title	Column 4 Source	Column 5 Date
Article 1	N. Korea	Peace Talks	Encounter in Pyongyang	Economist	6/17/00
Article 2	Germany	Nazi labor compensation	Deal-clinching Germany	Economist	6/17/00

As illustrated above, a legal index, correctly organized, can provide benefits similar to the annotated index. Furthermore, articles sort much better with an adept handling of sub-topics. Because of space constraints, I only included one sub-topic column in the example above. A second or third sub-topic would add even more clarity to an index. If you are still wondering if your index uses sub-topics or is, in fact, annotated, you might try the "multiples test". Take a look at the description of the article (column 3 of the annotated example). Each description you will notice is unique to the article it describes. To pass the multiples test and be considered a sub-topic, a description must be able to include multiple articles under the same description or sub-topic. In Article 1 of the annotated example the description, "Focuses on the problems involved in reconciliation" refers to a unique article. Now, an argument could be made that other articles could focus on the problems involved in reconciling the two Koreas and, thus, this description could be considered a sub-topic.

At this point I would suggest a second test, the "sort test." To apply this test you would ask yourself, "Would this description sort properly in the framework of the index as a whole?" The answer in this case would be, "no." While it would sort next to article descriptions worded exactly the same, it would also sort next to articles "focusing" on a variety of issues. Certainly there will be cases where it is impossible to draw the line between sub-topics and annotations. In this case common sense should prevail. Tournament officials and students (beforehand) should ask themselves whether or not a consistent pattern of indexing was used to create an organized framework of reference or if each article was individually described.

This whole discussion of annotated vs. non-annotated indexes may sound tedious and nit-picky, but I think a clarification of this issue should help resolve problems of annotated indexes before a student arrives at Nationals. In the past years, students were forced to literally cut out annotations in their indexes. In cases where there are no titles or sub-topics listed in the index, the results of this type of forced editing could render an index unusable. Students should also be aware that descriptions on post-it notes and written notes on an article are also considered forms of annotation and are illegal under Article X, section 4. Articles may be

highlighted but only in one color, and articles must remain intact.

Finally, I should address the most egregious of all illegal materials: written or typed out notes on issues, otherwise known as "cheat sheets" or "crib notes." Notes have been discovered neatly encased in glossy sheet protectors and hidden away in evidence tubs or simply scribbled in the middle of the flow pad. These prep aids require little clarification and are highly illegal. If found in your possession during the tournament, you will be swiftly disqualified. "Extemp speeches, handbooks, briefs, and outlines" are also considered illegal material and are "barred from the prep room" (Article X, section 4). An exception was made for one such brief book being sold in the hallways during the Portland tournament, but the issue of brief books remains controversial. My advise to you would be to leave all handbooks and brief books outside the prep room as long as the rule against their use remains in the NFL Constitution.

If disqualification or forced editing of your index does not deter you from cheating, perhaps you should consider the old cliché: *Cheaters never prosper*. While we all know this is a big fat lie spread by disgruntled losers, and many cheaters do in fact prosper vigorously, there is some truth to the statement. At some point, either your lack of knowledge or an extemp official will catch up with you. There really is no substitute for old fashioned and honest study and practice.

But let's face the facts. The issue of cheating in the prep room will likely never go away completely, but the most common response to any infraction in the prep room -- "nobody told me" -- will no longer hold water.



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