



CAMPIONATO ITALIANO GIOVANILE DI DEBATE HIGH SCHOOL ENG 2025/26

CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

Preamble

1.1 – The Italian Youth Debate Championship is a debate tournament for young people organized by Società Nazionale Debate Italia (Italian National Debate Society). These rules concern the championship reserved for high schools (high school championship).

1.2 – The Italian Youth Debate Championship consists of two sections, one in Italian and one in English.

1.3 – These regulations have been approved by the SNDI Executive Committee, which also approves the bodies, protocol, rules, and organizational procedures of the Championship.

1.4 – The Italian Youth Debate Championship is held annually.

1.5 – These regulations refer to the Italian Youth Debate Championship for the 2025-2026 season.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

2. Organizing Committee

2.1 – The Organizing Committee is appointed by the Board of Directors of Società Nazionale Debate Italia.

2.2 – It adopts the Rules of the Italian Youth Championship.

2.3 – It appoints the members of the other committees.

2.4 – Each other Championship Committee is represented in the Organizing Committee by its delegate.

2.5 – It decides the dates of the debates and the venue for the final stages of the Championship.

2.6 – It checks the eligibility requirements of all teams and their coaches.

2.7 – It ensures the smooth running of all stages of the Championship.



2.8 – The coach of a team participating in the Italian Youth Championship cannot be a member of the Organizing Committee.

3. Motions Committee

3.1 – The Motions Committee is appointed by the Organizing Committee and is composed of members with proven experience in debate competitions.

3.2 – It develops all the topics for the Italian Youth Championship – prepared and impromptu – and assigns them to the debates in agreement with the Director of the CIGD.

3.3 – It communicates the prepared topics to the Organizing Committee at least 4 weeks before the date of the debate on the prepared topic.

3.4 – It communicates the impromptu topics to the Organizing Committee within 24 hours prior to the debate on the impromptu topic.

3.5 – The Topics Committee may avail itself of the assistance of two external advisors appointed by the Board of Directors.

3.6 – The coach of a team participating in the Italian Youth Championship may not be a member of the Topics Committee.

4. Chief Adjudicators' Panel

4.1 – The members of the CAP are appointed by the Organizing Committee. Each championship has its own CAP. The CAP for the High Schools Championship is composed of members selected on the basis of their experience in judging the competition.

4.2 – The CAP identifies the judges for the Italian Youth Championship debates.

4.3 – It validates the results of each debate.

4.4 – It validates the team rankings that are compiled by the Tab Master.

4.5 – It resolves issues relating to the assignment of judges to debates.

4.6 – The coach of a team participating in the Italian Youth Championship cannot be a member of the CAP.

5. Equity Committee of SNDI

5.1 – The members of the Equity Committee are appointed by the SNDI APS Board of Directors for a three-year term.



5.2 – The Equity Committee monitors and ensures that the rules, decisions, and actions taken by other committees are based on principles of inclusivity, fairness, and impartiality.

5.3 – It evaluates and responds to any complaints that may be made during the Championship by committee members, judges, coaches, debaters, and any other person involved in the championship. This evaluation shall in any case comply with the principles and criteria set out in Article 11.3 below.

5.4 – Issues, when necessary, appropriate and proportionate measures in relation to proven violations of the rules, the debater's code, the code of conduct, and any behavior that may harm the dignity and freedom of Championship participants.

5.5 – The coach of a team participating in the Italian Youth Championship cannot be a member of the Ethics Committee.

6. Adjudicators

6.1 – The adjudicators who judge the debates in the Italian Youth Championship are selected by the CAP (see point 5).

6.2 – Judges are selected through a call for applications based on the CVs submitted, taking into account qualifications and experience.

6.3 – A team coach may not act as a judge in a debate involving their team.

6.4 – All judges are required to comply with the rules of the World Schools Debate Championships protocol (Annex No. 1 – World Schools Debating Championships Protocol) and the criteria for evaluation and scoring. (Annex No. 3 “Criteria for evaluation and scoring of debates”).

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

7. Participation criteria

7.1 – All teams that undertake to comply with the criteria set out in these regulations may participate in the Italian Youth Championship, whether they represent a single school or are composed of students from different schools, as indicated in 7.6 below.

7.2 – Each team must register at least one judge in the respective language (Italian or English). It is not possible to register a team if the team itself does not register a judge at the same time.

7.3 – Participating teams must consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of six debaters and one or two coaches.



7.4 – The Organizing Committee will accept registration requests up to the maximum limit allowed by the registered judges.

7.5 – Each school may register up to two teams in each section (ITA or ENG).

7.6. – Mixed teams may be registered, i.e., teams in which at least two debaters belong to a school other than that of the other team members.

7.7 – If the Organizing Committee is forced to limit the number of teams, it will give priority to diversity among schools: it will only accept the first team registered from each school. If it is necessary to further reduce the number of teams registered, teams will be accepted in order of registration.

7.8 – Until the end of the preliminary in-round, the team may replace a maximum of 3 members. Since only SNDI members may participate in the championship, the replacement debater must be registered with the SNDI for the year 2025/26. No replacements are allowed during the final phase.

7.9 – Debaters must be between the ages of thirteen and twenty on the day of the first debate of the Championship and be enrolled in a secondary school for the current school year.

7.10 – University students or students attending post-secondary educational institutions may only participate in the Italian Youth Championship in the section dedicated to them.

7.11 – The team coach must be at least eighteen years of age on the day of the first debate of the Championship.

7.12 – The coach is responsible during all stages of the Italian Youth Championship, both online and in person, for the behavior of their team members, who must comply with the rules established by the WSDC protocol, these regulations, and the SNDI APS code of conduct.

7.13 – Participation in the Championship is reserved for members of the Società Nazionale Debate Italia.

7.14 – Registration for the Championship for both categories is done online using specific and different forms within the times and in the manner specified in the Notice of Participation, which will be published by the Organizing Committee.

7.15 When registering teams, it is possible to indicate that the team belongs to the novice category if the majority of its members have less than one year of debating experience. This



includes participation in national and/or international competitions, as well as membership in a debating club.

WSD PROTOCOL AND DEBATE RULES

8. Debate protocol and rules

8.1 – The debate protocol adopted by the Italian Youth Debate Championship is that of the World Schools Debating Championships. (Annex No. 1 – World Schools Debating Championships Protocol)

8.2 – The duration of the first three speeches is 8 minutes, with a 4-minute rebuttal.

8.3 – Debates will be held on Impromptu Topics and Prepared Topics.

8.4 – Impromptu topics: teams will prepare in their assigned classrooms, or virtual classrooms for online rounds. The 60 minutes of preparation time will start from the moment the topic is announced.

8.5 – No written, printed, or published material on paper or online may be used, with the exception of Italian language dictionaries and fact books. During preparation, debaters may be asked to share their screen and camera. Teams that do not comply with these requests will lose by default.

8.5-bis - The same rules for the preparation of impromptu motions apply to the final phase in person, during which coaches are required to hand over their smartphones, tablets, and smartwatches, except for those who, for valid reasons, have obtained prior permission from the Ethics Committee.

8.6 – During the preparation phase, at least two and no more than five team members must be present. The coach may not be present during the preparation phase. The debaters must be visible, as must the environment in which they are located, which must guarantee that there is no external interference during preparation. Only the debaters may be present in the preparation area. Once the motion has been read, no further team members may join the preparation room.

8.7 – Prepared topics: four weeks before the debate on a prepared topic takes place, the Organizing Committee publishes the debate topic on the SNDI APS website, in the “Italian Youth Debate Championship” section (<https://sn-di.it/campionato-italiano-giovanile-di-debate/>).

8.8 – Before the start of the debate, the team must declare its starting speakers and reserve speaker. The reserve speaker participates in the preparation even in the case of an



impromptu motion, then attends the debate as a spectator along with any other team members.

8.9 – Failure to comply with the rules will result in the team being disqualified and awarded zero points. The opposing team will be awarded the average of the points obtained in the previous and subsequent debates held in the same phase.

8.10 – During the debate, if a speaker is unable to present or continue their speech for technical or health reasons, they will be replaced by one of the reserve speakers or one of the other two speakers on their team.

8.11 – During an online meeting, if a speaker is disconnected, the debate is suspended. If the disconnection lasts longer than ten minutes, the reserve speaker or one of the other two speakers on the debating team continues the speech.

8.12 – Team members may debate from the same location or, alternatively, from separate locations.

8.13 – If the members of a team debate from the same location, the reserve and the other members of the team do not sit with the debaters but in a position where they cannot communicate with the team. The reserve must, however, be ready to intervene if necessary.

8.14. If a team has only two debaters available and is still willing to debate, the order of speeches shall follow the A B A B pattern (Iron Person rule).

8.15 Each team may use the iron person rule up to a maximum of two times in the preliminary rounds, under penalty of automatic exclusion from the final phase.

8.16 Teams that qualify for the final phases in person must ensure the participation of at least three team members. The iron person rule cannot be applied in the final phases.

9. Awarding victory

9.1 – At the end of each debate, the judges award victory to one of the two teams by assigning a score for content, style, and strategy. (See Annex No. 3, “Debate evaluation criteria and scoring”).

9.2 – To advance to the next stages, teams are ranked according to the number of victories obtained; in the event of a tie in the number of victories, according to the number of ballots received; in the event of a further tie, according to the overall score; if there is still a tie, according to the maximum score in a single debate.



9.3 – If a team withdraws from the debate, the opposing team wins by default and is awarded the average of the points obtained in the previous and subsequent debates in the same stage.

9.4 – The outcome of each debate is announced by the judges at the end of the debate.

10. Debate judges

10.1 – Debates in the in-round are judged by three judges.

10.2 – Debates in the out-rounds are judged by at least three judges.

10.3 – The final debate is judged by at least five judges, including at least one judge from the Chief Adjudicators' Panel.

10.4 – A judge may judge the same team more than once.

11. Complaints

11.1 – In the spirit of debate and of the *Code of the Debater* (Annex No. 4 “The Debater's Code of Ethics”), team speakers and coaches shall accept the judges' decisions with equanimity.

11.2 – Any complaints must be submitted to the Equity Committee in writing at eticom@sndi.it within 24 hours of the end of the debate.

11.3 – The outcome of the debate may be challenged solely and exclusively on grounds of a formal violation of protocol. Under no circumstances will complaints relating to the merits of the judges' decision be considered.

CHAMPIONSHIP STRUCTURE

12. Stages

12.1 – The Italian Youth Debate Championship is divided into two stages (see Annex 2 – “Structure of the 2024–2025 Italian Youth Debate Championship”).

First stage – In-round

Second stage – Out-rounds A Final 16 is planned for the Italian section and a Final 4 ENG for the English section, but variations due to the number of teams registered and/or organizational reasons evaluated and communicated in advance by the Organizing Committee are not excluded.



13. First phase – In-round

13.1 – Each team debates six times during the preliminary in-round on impromptu topics and one prepared topic, both for and against.

13.2 – The prepared topic will be debated in the third and fourth rounds.

13.3 – For debates on impromptu topics (first, second, fifth, and sixth rounds), the topic and the position to be defended are communicated one hour before the debate.

13.4 – At the end of the fourth round, teams with 1 and 0 wins do not qualify for the subsequent rounds. The team with the highest ranking may be repêchaged to ensure an even number of teams in the fifth and sixth rounds.

13.5 – Team pairings are decided based on the “Power pairing high–low” criterion.

13.6 – The in-round takes place online.

13.7 – A debate round is scheduled approximately every 28/35 days.

14. Second Phase (out-rounds) – Final 16 for the Italian section and Final 4 ENG for the English section

14.1 – The top 16 teams in the single group qualify for the Final 16. Four groups are formed, each containing four teams, by drawing lots from among the top four teams (band 1), the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth teams (band 2), the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth (group 3), and the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth (group 4). For the English section, the top four teams will advance to the Final 4, competing in a round-robin tournament.

14.2 – The Final 16 consists of three preliminary rounds, with two impromptu topics and one prepared topic debated only once. Each team meets all the teams in its group. The same applies to the Final 4 ENG.

14.3 – The position to be taken on the prepared topic is decided by a coin toss between the two teams.

14.4 – At the end of the Final 16, the top three teams from each group and the best second-placed team from the three groups based on points scored advance to the semifinals. In the first semifinal, the top-ranked team based on points scored faces the best second-placed team. In the second semifinal, the other two top-ranked teams from the groups face each other. At the end of the Final 4 ENG, the top two teams advance to the Final.

14.5 – The winning teams from the semifinals advance to the final.



14.6 – For impromptu debates, the topic and position to be defended are announced one hour before the debate.

14.7 – The prepared topic is announced at least four weeks before the debate.

14.8 – The final will be held on the topic prepared and debated during the Finals.

14.10 – For the final, the position to be defended is determined by a coin toss between the two teams. In the event that the two finalist teams have already competed on the same topic, the position to be taken may be decided ex officio and will correspond to the opposite of that taken in the previous competition.

15. Novice category's finals

15.1 - At the end of the in-round, the two highest-ranked teams belonging to the novice category (see point 7.15) will advance to a final dedicated to teams with less experience.

15.2 - If one or more teams belonging to the novice category also qualify for the final phase, they will be asked to decide which phase to participate in before the start of the final phases. If a team in this situation chooses to compete in the general final, the next best team registered as novice will be admitted to the minor final.

15.3 - The Organizing Committee reserves the right to opt for the novice final to be held online, depending on availability and practicality of the organization.

RANKINGS AND RESULTS

16.1 - The final rankings will be announced at the end of each phase via an announcement on the SNDI APS website and direct communications to participants.

16.2 - During the course of the Championship, it will be possible to view the partial results of the teams on TabbyCat via a private URL.

16.3 - The speaker rankings will be published on TabbyCat and will be fully visible via a private URL at the end of the Italian Youth Championship.

16.4 - Speakers who have participated in at least three debates in the six preliminary rounds will be eligible for the speaker rankings.

17. Awards

17.1 – At the end of the Final, awards will be given to:

- the team that wins the final;



- the team that comes second;
- the best speakers based on the scores awarded in the single round;
- the best speakers registered in the novice category will be awarded separately, based on the scores awarded in the single round.

17.2 – Other prizes may be awarded at the discretion of the Organizing Committee.

18. Approval and amendments to the Regulations

18.1 – Amendments to these regulations must be approved by the SNDI APS Board of Directors.

19. Code of Conduct

19.1 – The Code of Conduct is described in Annex No. 5.

19.2 – Upon registration as a member of SNDI APS, it is assumed that the Code of Conduct has been read, accepted, and that the member undertakes to comply with it.

19.3 Any violation of the Code of Conduct may be reported to the Ethics Committee by any SNDI APS member or any person who witnesses the violation and/or suffers its consequences. The Ethics Committee acts in accordance with the Code of Conduct and, if necessary, takes the measures provided for therein.

Attachments

No. 1 – “World Schools Debating Championships Protocol”

No. 2 – “Structure of the 2025-2026 Italian Youth Debating Championship”

No. 3 – “Debate evaluation criteria and scoring system”

No. 4 – “Debater’s Code of Ethics”

No. 5 – “Code of Conduct”