# Rules Revision Proposals

## Medical Waiver

### Rationale

The current AFA code stipulates the duration of eligibility is 5 academic years, 4 NDTs. It also allows for medical hardship appeals. However, the code also says the NDT may impose additional eligibility restrictions.

The NDT Rules *do* impose a restriction that seems to obviate the medical hardship provision:

Rule II.A.1.f stipulates: “In addition to AFA eligibility standards, participation in any debate tournament in more than ten semesters renders a debater ineligible to attend the NDT.”

This provision has been interpreted to eliminate the possibility of a medical hardship waiver in the event the person has participated in more than 10 semesters. The proposed revision would allow students to seek an eligibility waiver in the case of substantial medical hardship.

### Proposed Revision to NDT Rule II.A.1.f

#### Proposed Ten Semesters Rule with Medical Hardship Exception (NDT Rules II.A.1.f)

f. In addition to AFA eligibility standards, participation in any debate tournament in more than ten semesters renders a debater ineligible to attend the NDT. **Students may submit a request to the Appeals Committee seeking a waiver from this requirement in the event of substantial medical hardship.**

### Current NDT & AFA Rules

#### Ten Semesters Rule (NDT Rules II.A.1.f)

f. In addition to AFA eligibility standards, participation in any debate tournament in more than ten semesters renders a debater ineligible to attend the NDT.

#### Eligibility, Medical Hardship (AFA Code I.2)

2. A student's eligibility for forensics competition shall expire following participation during 5 academic years, or 4 academic years of AFA national tournaments.

A. A student shall have used his/her eligibility in a given academic year if he/she participates in three or more forensics tournaments:

i. A student shall be considered to have participated in a tournament if he/she competes in at least half of the scheduled preliminary rounds of the tournament.

ii. A tournament is defined as a forensics contest involving at least four schools in which at least four rounds of debate or two rounds of individual events are held, decisions are rendered by judges and awards given. This definition does not include summer workshop tournaments.

iii. A student's participation in individual events shall not count against his/her eligibility to compete in debate, and vice versa.

B. Students may appeal cases of medical hardships to a designated appeals committee of the NDT or the NIET.

#### NDT May Impose Additional Restrictions (AFA Code I.5)

5. The above eligibility rules shall not restrict additional eligibility requirements established by either the NDT or NIET Committees or by individual tournament directors.

## Clarifying Record & Round Requirements

### Rationale

In recent years, we have had instances in which questions have arisen regarding how maverick rounds should count with regards to round counts for eligibility purposes and win-loss records for Second Round application purposes. This season, a team officially sought eligibility for the Second Round process despite the tournament records reflecting that they were 2 losses below the 50% preliminary round win-loss threshold. Two of their losses were incurred when one debater was debating maverick due to the partner’s illness. The Appeals Committee determined those losses should not render them ineligible.

However, it was noted that the language likely warrants clarification, as in some instances maverick rounds have probably counted for the purposes of meeting eligibility round or win-loss requirements, and there have been other instances in which teams have withdrawn from tournaments (as opposed to having mavericks debate) due to concerns that lost maverick rounds would count against a team’s second round eligibility.

There are valid reasons to allow occasional maverick debates (as opposed to not debating) – it allows the solo debater to practice, it ensures the opponent doesn’t get a bye). However, it should not be routinely encouraged, as debate is still a two-person activity.

The language below is intended to clarify that maverick losses should not count *against* a “team’s record”. This does not apply, however, if the “team” debates the majority of the preliminary debates as a maverick [i.e. in an 8-round tournament, if 5 or more rounds are debated by a maverick], the team is not eligible to utilize this exception.

It also clarifies that this provision is not intended to invalidate maverick rounds counting for the purposes of meeting preliminary round eligibility requirements – i.e. a team with 18 preliminary rounds should not be considered ineligible if one of those rounds was a maverick round.

### Proposed Revision

#### Proposed II.C.2.c.2

2. The following regulations govern awarding of At-Large bids:

a. Selection of At-Large participants shall be determined by the voting membership of the National Committee with the exception of the NDT Tournament Director. National Committee members shall rank for At-Large selection a number of teams (excluding their own teams containing a student they have previously coached) double the number of awardable bids for the First Round At-Large and triple the number for Second Round At-Large. All other teams shall be given the next rank. On an agreed date all voting members of the Committee will telephone the NDT Tournament Director and inform him or her of their rankings.

b. The NDT Tournament Director will sum each team's total after dropping high and low ranks (using the average of all other ranks for a member's own team) and award the bids to the lowest ranked teams. If a tie results among the top positions (i.e., the last bid in the given At-Large round), the NDT Tournament Director shall drop an additional high and low ranks for the teams involved down to eight total ranks. If a tie still exists the NDT Tournament Director shall re-rank the teams involved in the tie based on the original ranked relationships of each committee member (except the member(s) with teams involved). If a tie still exists, then each member (except with teams involved) shall be telephoned and given the opportunity to re-rank the tied teams, after re-evaluating the respective credentials.

c. Second Round At-Large process.

(1) Any teams not selected for participation in the NDT through the First Round At-Large or district processes may apply for a Second Round At-Large bid.

(2) All teams selected through the Second Round At-Large process must have a 50% or greater preliminary round win-loss record in rounds on the fall CEDA topic or its NDT topic parallel immediately prior to the District tournament or at the time of submission for second round bids. The team's record for every tournament attended prior to submission must be reported on the application form.

**a. Illness exception – In instances in which the applicants’ record includes preliminary round losses incurred when one of the partners has debated part of a tournament as a maverick due to the illness of the second partner, those losses should not count against the 50% preliminary round win-loss record (i.e. they are exempted from negatively impacting that record). Applicants should provide documentation indicating that the partner debated alone due to the second partner’s illness.**

**b. Illness exception clarifications – This illness exception is not applicable in circumstances in which a partner debates maverick in the majority of preliminary rounds. This illness exception is not intended to invalidate “maverick” rounds counting for the purposes of meeting minimum round requirements for District Process eligibility if both partners participate in the majority of a team’s rounds at a tourament.**

(3) Teams submitting Second Round At-Large applications may include a paragraph of explanation concerning extenuating circumstances.

(4) Unless a school has received two bids in the First Round At-Large process, participation in the district process shall be a prerequisite for receipt of a Second Round At-Large selection. Participation in the district process is defined as:

a. both members of a team debating in at least 50% of the preliminary rounds at a tournament component;

b. in districts that allow a limited-number of teams from each school participating in the tournament component, submission to rankings as part of the district process that determines district-eligible teams and being ranked as ineligible;

c. receiving one of the allocated district bid slots as determined by the district.

### Current NDT Rules

#### Current II.C.2.c.2

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