

Example Round - NSDA Nationals 2018 Public Forum Finals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUnyLbeu7qU>

This is an example of a Public Forum round. A Round Breakdown is provided below for notes on what is happening at each point in time as well as comments on the round. As you watch, make notes of what you think the debaters are doing well and what they could improve on. What are some things that they do well that you think you could use in your own debating?

Topic

Resolved: On balance, the benefits of United States participation in the North American Free Trade Agreement outweigh the consequences.

Teams

Mission San Jose High School - CON, speaking first

Ishan Maunder - 1st speaker

Devesh Kodnani - 2nd speaker

Flanagan High School - PRO, speaking second

Christian Sheerer - 1st speaker

Eden Medina - 2nd speaker

Notes:

- Each of the speakers gives brief thank yous before each of their first speeches in the round. This is not customary in a normal Public Forum round but occurs in this example round because it is the final round of the national tournament.
- Notice that Mission San Jose's team is con but is speaking first in the round. This is because the sides of the debate and the order are determined separately; the pro team can but is not necessarily the team that speaks first.
- Some of the speakers go above or below the time limit for the speech. Generally, it is best to get as close to the limit as possible. Avoid going more than five seconds over the limit.
- This round occurred in 2018, before changes were made to the structure of Public Forum rounds. The structure itself is the same, but some of the time limits are now different. These differences in time limits are **highlighted** in the breakdown of the round. Any time limits that are not highlighted have not changed.

Round Breakdown

4:05-8:10 - CON's 1st speaker (Ishan Maunder) gives the first speech of the round, the CON case. This speech is intended to be four minutes long.

- The CON case only has one contention. Typically, cases will have multiple contentions.

- He speaks at a reasonable pace and with good clarity. Clarity is the primary goal of delivery because it ensures that the judge can understand everything that is being said.

11:20-15:36 - PRO's 1st speaker (Christian Sheerer) gives the second speech of the round, the PRO case. This speech is intended to be four minutes long.

- Notice how the speaker asks if the judges are ready before beginning his speech. This is a good thing to do before each speech of the round.
- The PRO case begins with two dimensions on which the team believes the round should be evaluated. This is known as framework. The contentions also follow along these dimensions (but do not have to).

15:56-19:05 - The two first speakers (Ishan Maunder and Christian Sheerer) participate in the first crossfire. Crossfire is intended to be three minutes long.

- The speakers ask each other very targeted, specific, and purposeful questions. Questions should be used to further an argument or to set one up if possible.
- One thing that the speakers perform poorly on is that they repeatedly cut each other off. In round, it is best to be as polite as possible while still being assertive.
- CON's 1st speaker (Ishan Maunder) asks numerous questions in a row in the first half of the crossfire. In general, crossfire should alternate between the speakers; one team should get to ask a question, then the other team should get to ask the next question.
- PRO's 1st speaker (Christian Sheerer) declines to answer the final question because time has elapsed. No questions should be asked after the time has elapsed. However, if a question is asked while there is still time left, but there is not sufficient time to answer the question, a good rule is to ask the judge whether it is okay to answer the question.

21:24-25:32 - CON's 2nd speaker (Devesh Kodnani) gives the third speech of the round, the CON rebuttal. This speech is intended to be four minutes long.

- The speaker makes a point regarding how the wording of the resolution should be interpreted. It is important in round to make sure that both teams are operating under the same interpretation of the resolution. If their interpretations differ, each team should provide strong arguments and reasoning for why their interpretation is superior.
- The speaker structures the majority of his speech in what is known as a line-by-line. He follows the structure and order of the other team's case and rebuts specific arguments made within their contentions. He gives multiple responses to each argument, which is good.

29:57-34:08 - PRO's 2nd speaker (Eden Medina) gives the fourth speech of the round, the PRO rebuttal. This speech is intended to be four minutes long.

- The speaker starts her speech with the argument that PRO's second contention should be the most important thing evaluated in the round. This is known as weighing and is critical for helping to direct the judge's focus toward the most important arguments.
- After briefly defending her own contention, the speaker moves on to rebut the CON team's contention. The second rebuttal of the round (the fourth speech) should focus

primarily on attacking the other team's contentions but should also address any important points made in the other team's rebuttal.

- The speaker's responses are very specific and driven by evidence. She uses a good structure, which is to fulfill three points with each response: 1. A brief recap of the other team's argument, 2. Why the other team's argument is wrong, and 3. Why it matters in the context of the round.
- The speaker speeds up throughout her speech and is speaking relatively fast. It is best to avoid speaking too fast in rounds, especially if it comes at the expense of clarity. She is clear and comprehensible, but it is still preferable to speak slower. She stumbles a few times in her speech because of her speed.

34:20-37:24 - The two second speakers (Devesh Kodnani and Eden Medina) participate in the second crossfire. Crossfire is intended to be three minutes long.

- CON's 2nd speaker (Devesh Kodnani) references something that was said in the first crossfire. Continuity throughout the round and keeping track of what has been said is important.
- The speakers get bogged down debating one argument for most of the crossfire. It is best to diversify what is discussed during crossfire and hit multiple points.

39:20-41:45 - CON's 1st speaker (Ishan Maunder) gives the fifth speech of the round, the CON summary speech. **This speech is now intended to be three minutes long, but in 2018, it had a time limit of two minutes.**

- Before beginning his speech, the speaker gives a brief description of how his speech will be structured. This is known as an off-the-clock roadmap and is useful for letting the judge know the order in which arguments will be addressed.
- The speaker speaks very quickly throughout the speech and sometimes stumbles and loses clarity.
- The summary speech addresses both teams' cases and attempts to boil down the round into the most important issues. In this speech, smaller, less relevant arguments may need to be disregarded in order to give appropriate priority to the more contested arguments.

44:45-46:54 - PRO's 1st speaker (Christian Sheerer) gives the sixth speech of the round, the PRO summary speech. **This speech is now intended to be three minutes long, but in 2018, it had a time limit of two minutes.**

- The speaker makes an argument that the other team should not be allowed to bring up new arguments in the final focus. This is customary; completely new arguments and evidence are generally prohibited in the final speeches because there is not enough time left for the other team to adequately respond to them.
- The speaker says that PRO's argument is more important because they are actually able to quantify how big the impact is. This is known as impact calculus, which is used to compare the relative importance of impacts on the dimensions of probability (how likely

something is to happen), timeframe (how soon something will happen), and magnitude (how big of an impact the thing will have).

47:10-50:18 - All speakers participate in grand crossfire. Crossfire is intended to be three minutes long.

- Unlike previous crossfires, all speakers remain seated.
- The speakers debate at length the difference between Mexico's crisis and Argentina's. This is because it is an extremely important point in the round.

50:52-52:57 - CON's 2nd speaker (Devesh Kodnani) gives the seventh speech of the round, the CON final focus. This speech is intended to be two minutes long.

- The final focus crystallizes the arguments in the round and brings it down to the most important issues. These are known as voter issues and are the primary reasons the judge should vote for the team.
- The speaker ends by making several points "on balance", comparing the impacts and arguments of the two teams in a broad sense.

53:34-55:43 - PRO's 2nd speaker (Eden Medina) gives the eighth speech of the round, the PRO final focus. This speech is intended to be two minutes long.

- The speaker points out a specific piece of evidence as the reason the other team should lose. It is good to emphasize specific pieces of evidence if they are crucial to the argument or have not been addressed appropriately by the other team.
- The speaker speaks very fast and makes very specific points. This may not always be the best idea in the final focus, where it is better to sum up the round and create a lasting impression of the most important points in the round.