
The publication of *Championship Debates and Speeches* in 1986 replaced the annual publication of a transcript of the final round debate at National Debate Tournament in the *Journal of the American Forensic Association*. The new publication includes a transcript of the final round debate at the CEDA national tournament, as well as transcripts of the winning speeches in public address events at both AFA-NIET and I.E. Nationals sponsored by NFA. Publication of the best in American forensics in any given year is undoubtedly intended to serve several functions. First, it allows those unable to attend national tournaments a chance to see what takes place. Second, it provides a pedagogical tool for teachers and coaches—offering examples of winning speeches and debates. Finally, it provides a record of activities in the forensic community in any given year.

*Championship Debates and Speeches* provides an excellent record of what was "hot" in individual events and debate in 1987. However, as a pedagogical device, its use is limited. Several features cut against the usefulness of the volume as a teaching (or coaching) aid. First, while the debate transcripts are interesting to coaches and debaters, they are of limited use to anyone not already familiar with the concepts of debate. That is, a reader must be familiar with the terminology of debate, as well as the issues that have been argued on a particular topic, to understand fully the progression of argument in a debate. However, both debates transcribed in *Championship Debates and Speeches* do provide excellent examples of affirmative case construction. Both Baylor (NDT) and Macalester (CEDA) present clear, well-structured cases that would provide an excellent model even for beginning debaters.

A second weakness of *Championship Debates and Speeches* as a pedagogical tool stems from its limited coverage of final rounds at the individual events national tournaments. It is apparent from my personal experience and from judge comments printed in the volume that, in many instances, judge decisions are not unanimous in
final rounds. Thus, it is valuable to see the differences among speeches in a particular round. Toward this end, the Interstate Oratory Association, for example, includes all speeches from a given year in its publication, Winning Orations. With the availability of final round videotapes from I.E. Nationals, it is possible to show students the other speeches, but it would also be informative to include them in the volume.

A third weakness of the volume stems from the inclusion of judge critiques. In principle, it is an educationally useful practice to include judge comments, so that readers can see how particular arguments in debates are resolved and how particular approaches to public speaking "play" before judges. In practice, judge comments tend to presume an expertise in forensics beyond that of many students. In addition, only comments on the first place winners in individual events are included. It is difficult to understand a ranking without some understanding of the others that were ranked.

I do not mean to suggest that Championship Debates and Speeches is without value. It remains the only permanent record (as far as I have been able to determine) of NDT, CEDA and AFA- NIET champions. Further, it makes interesting reading for students, teachers and coaches with some experience in debate and individual events. However, broader coverage of individual events and the inclusion of pedagogically-based critiques would improve its usefulness.

Matthew Sobnosky
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska