

and the like. This will enable the International Public Debate Association to gain a better grasp of the competition that occurs at regular tournament

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Let Me Root, Root, Root for the Home Team: An Analysis of Home Field Advantage in IPDA

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Abstract

Several years ago, a paper was presented at the International Public Debate Association (IPDA) National Tournament hosted by The University of Arkansas at Monticello that proposed that teams who competed in their own tournaments had an

advantage over non host school teams. In an attempt to recreate this study, we looked at preliminary rounds for tournaments in the last two years. Results indicated that most teams who competed at their own tournaments did better at their tournament than they did at other tournaments they competed in that year that they did not host.

The International Public Debate Association (IPDA) is relatively new on the scene in the debate community. However, this does not mean IPDA is not a quickly growing format that is pulling in new people and programs every year. There are more tournaments and those tournaments are seeing ever-increasing numbers. With the increased participation in IPDA, it is becoming a formidable debate format.

Tournaments are held by a host school whose team may or may not compete in that tournament at the tournament director's discretion. Often teams chose not to have their debaters compete in order to help run the tournament and/or round out judging obligations. The field of debaters is broken down into three divisions: novice, for those with fewer than eight tournaments of experience, varsity, for anyone who has yet to receive a four-year degree, and professional, open to anyone, especially those who have already earned a degree. Tournaments begin with preliminary rounds of competition. Depending on the tournament, there may be six, seven, or eight preliminary rounds. From here, the top debaters in each division, not more than half of the competitive field, advance into bracket-style out rounds (IPDA, 2009).

Debaters receive points for season-long awards based on how well they do at tournaments. They are awarded one point for every win in preliminary rounds, one point for breaking into out rounds, and two points for every win in out rounds. Each debater's top six tournaments count toward their cumulative season-long points and awards are given to the top ten debaters in each division at the national tournament each year. Thus, it can be seen here how important every win becomes to a debater competing for a season-long award (IPDA, 2009).

Alexander and Gibson (2005) presented a paper stating that teams competing in their own tournaments had an advantage over other competitors that was apparent through this research. The authors termed the phenomenon "home-field advantage". Teams were struck by this information and vowed not to compete in their own tournaments during the following tournament season (2005-2006 season). The paper was presented at the national tournament in Monticello, Arkansas, thus the paper became an unofficial statement was known as the Monticello Pledge and was instituted by a number of tournaments including the Hot-N Spicy at Louisiana Tech (LATech, 2006).

In the four years following the Monticello Pledge, teams are once again competing in their own tournaments. We were interested to see if there is still a home-field advantage for competitors competing in their own tournaments, or if through the years, this phenomenon has ended in IPDA.

Review of Literature

In an attempt to find relevant literature, a search of multiple academic databases and many of the college debate organizations was done with no results being found discussing home-field advantage; which shows the importance of this research. Articles having to do with home-field advantage and its effect on performance can have application within IPDA debate such gaining a greater understanding of tournament dynamics. Irving and Goldstein (1990) define home-field advantage as "sports teams

playing in their home arena or on their home field win significantly more often is well documented.” They also found that in some sports this advantage is increased due to lack of games, such as in football.

Home field advantage also applies to the debate season since there are so few tournaments, so every point counts. Nevill and Holder (1999) did a meta-analysis of other research discussing home-field advantage and found that four factors are thought to be responsible for this increased win average. They said one of the most important was crowd size because it has a significant effect on the home team. They provide to reasons for this. First, the home team wants to perform better and does perform better in front of a crowd of their supports, which would occur for debaters debating in their home tournament.

Second, the crowd can also influence the officials, and as Nevill and Holder (1999) state ”it only takes two or three crucial decisions to go against the away team or in favor of the home team to give the side playing at home the ‘edge’.“ This edge would not occur in IPDA debate because there are rules that do not allow for judges from a school to judge their own competitors. There is also evidence that lack of travel can also improve performance (Worthen & Wade, 1999). Lack of travel would be true for debaters who can travel as much as eight hours to get to a tournament. The research leads us to ask how does the home-field advantage affect preliminary wins for IPDA debaters who compete in a tournament when their school is the host.

Methodology

We wanted to keep the research as sterile as possible, so we chose to look at preliminary rounds only. We also wanted the data to be cohesive and an even comparison, so we chose to look at only tournaments that had six preliminary rounds. This kept the averaging processes we used from creating a biased number system. However, we had limited access to accumulation sheets to compile this data, so we looked only at tournaments from the years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. This gave us 18 tournaments to consider.

To crunch down the numbers to create a system of comparison, we averaged a team’s win percentage for each tournament. We did this by looking at each individual debater on a team and calculating their win/loss percentage. We used only tournaments with six preliminary rounds (six is a standard number). For example, if a debater went 1-5 in prelims, this means that he/she won 1 out of 6 rounds or 16 percent of prelim rounds. 0-6 was given 0 percent, 2-4 33 percent, 3-3 50 percent, 4-2 66 percent, 5-1 83 percent and 6-0 100 percent.

After figuring out each debaters win percentage, we found the average win percentage for each team. We did this by adding every debater’s win percentage then dividing the total by the number of debaters competing in the tournament. This gave us the team’s win percentage.

We chose to follow teams because we think it gives us a better view of IPDA as a whole. Aside from following every single individual debater, there was not a lot of reason we could see for following individuals. Following every debater for two years would have been extremely time consuming, and we do not feel it would have given us a broad picture of how a team does when competing in their own tournament.

We do not want this article to seem accusatory towards certain teams. We only wish this to be a study of IPDA and whether or not teams competing in their own

tournament have an advantage. It is for this reason in the results section we will not be listing teams by their names, rather by arbitrarily assigned numbers.

Results

Looking at the 18 tournaments for which we had compiled data, we removed tournaments where debaters either did not compete in their own tournaments, or the tournaments that had more than six preliminary rounds.

This left us with 12 tournaments. Of these 12, three teams either did worse at their own tournament or did average with the rest of their season. The other nine did better than they did at other tournaments.

For team 1 (T1), their tournament tied their lowest preliminary win average of that year. Their tournament averages were 41.5, 43, 41.5, 49.6 and 53. 41.5 was their own tournament.

T2 did better at their tournament than they did at any other tournament for both years we looked at. Their tournament averages were 27.33, 50, 43, 28.75. 33.50 was their own tournament- 7 points higher than their next highest tournament over two years and 22.67 points higher than their next highest tournament for that year.

T3 did better at their tournament than any other tournament for the two years. Their tournament averages were 49.5, 49.8, 69.6, 54, 42.71, 59.29, 44.17, and 47.63. Their own tournament average was 69.6, 10 points higher than their next highest tournament and 20 points higher than their average tournament for that year.

T4 did better at their tournament for both years. Their tournament averages were 44, 60.75, 41.5, 62.67, 49.73, 41.36, 53.07, 56.68, 63.86, 59.9, 74.6 and 58.53. Their tournaments were 60.75 and 74.6. 74.6 was 10.7 better than their next highest tournament and 16.2 points higher than their tournament win average for that year. 60.75 was 6 points higher than their next highest that year and 14.44 higher than their tournament win average that year.

T5 did better at one of their tournaments one year, tied with their highest tournament the next year and did average at their second tournament that year. Their tournament averages were 66.17, 55.75, 28.36, 58.67, 51.25, 50.88, 56.4, 58, 49.75, 46.2, and 49.6. Their first tournament was 66.17 which was 11 points higher than their next highest tournament for that year. Their second and third tournaments were 58 and 49.75. 58 is tied with their next highest tournament, but still 10 points higher than their average tournament percentage for that year. Their last tournament was 49.75 and was in line with their other tournaments that year.

T6 did better at one tournament and worse at another. Their averages were 57.18, 49.5, 53.92, 48.18, 39.09, 42.27, 40.62, and 53.75. Their tournaments were 49.5 and 53.75. 49.5 was 8 points lower than their next lowest tournament for that year. However, 53.75 was the same as their next highest tournament and 9 points higher than their average tournament percentage for that year.

We did not have as many tournament results for T7, but felt that we should include T7 for the sake of not misleading the data. Their tournaments were 38.67 and 40. 40 was their own tournament.

Discussion

Significance & Implications to IPDA

We are going to exclude T7 from the discussion of significance because we do not feel that we had enough data to say that the two points they were higher at their own

tournament is enough to justify either way. That being said, we would like to look at the six other teams.

In the 12 tournaments we looked at, we are excluding one (T7), leaving 11 tournaments. Of these 11, there were eight instances of teams doing better at their own tournament. We would like to break these into two categories- teams that did five or less points better and teams that did six or more points better.

Seven tournaments showed teams who did more than six points better at their own tournament than they did at another other tournament that year. When looking at only six preliminary round tournaments, this means that each win is worth about 16 points. Teams who do more than six points higher are looking at an extra win for half or more of their team. For example, a team who brought 16 competitors would have eight go 4-2 instead of 3-3.

Of these tournaments, five did more than ten points better. This means that roughly their entire team did about one win better at their own tournament that they did at any other-- an entire team of individuals who gained an extra win at their own tournament. When looking at tournaments where the difference in breaking is one or two speaker points, an extra win can make a huge difference.

Because season-long awards consist of a debaters highest six tournaments, teams who compete in their own tournament would have an advantage in season-long awards. Getting an extra win than a debater would normally get at a tournament gives them more opportunity to break or even have a better preliminary score if they do not break. We think home field advantage is something IPDA should look at seriously. *Limitations and Future Research*

We feel a more extensive study would have been better but there was a lack of available an archived accumulations. We believe that if IPDA wants to become a more academic organization we should start making accumulations from past years available. This opens the door for a lot of research to be done about IPDA without requiring that someone have been on the circuit for years and years. It would also allow for more complete research to be done.

We do not know the limits of web and online archiving space, but we do not think it would be very limiting on space to keep the old archives or even add a supplemental page designated only to archived accumulations, similar to the archives of old nationals records on the IPDA website.

With that being said, we would like to continue this study. We think looking at preliminary rounds is a very repeatable process and allows us to periodically reexamine our style of debate and make improvements.

We think we would like to evaluate nationals and see if teams who did better at their own tournaments had more season-long wins. While we do not have a hypothesis on this, we think it would something interesting to study either way.

Conclusion

In summation, we believe that teams who compete in their own tournament have a clear advantage over other teams who compete at that tournament. We think this is something we should keep in mind when we host tournaments. We are not here to demonize anyone for their participation, rather just remind them of the implications. From the data we have gathered, we have seen up to a 22 average point difference when a team competes in their own tournament versus their other tournaments for that year. We

also found that 8 out of 11 tournaments had teams who did better at their own tournament than they did at others, which is more than 2/3 of the time. Home field advantage is a significant and prevalent issue that teams should keep in mind in upcoming seasons.

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Counterplans: Used as tests

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ABSTRACT:

This article attempts a new view of counterplans. We will begin by examining how counterplans, for the most part, are viewed in current academic competitive debate and why. Then the article will re-examine burdens and the assumptions of burdens. This article will finally explore other possibilities of negative's abilities to access the idea of counterplans due to negative's inability to access fiat.

Traditionally in competitive academic debate, counterpanes are used as negative's ability to offer alternatives to the affirmative's case and access solvency of the status quo's harms. Roger Solt summarized this concept of counterplans best when he wrote, "a counterplan is a negative plan... which is offered to the judge as an alternative possessing coequal status with plan.(p. 127)" Solt assumes through this definition that negative has the same abilities as the affirmative.

Traditional Counterplan Theory

Counterplan theory sees this alternative construction of existence as a necessity to prove an opportunity cost of doing plan. Micheal Korkok (1999) explains that opportunity costs are, "...the value of a choice is the difference between its worth and the worth of the best alternative that must be forgone. The worth of the best alternative that must be forgone is call a choice's *opportunity cost*. (p. 61)" Basically, if the affirmative's plan is enacted, there might be possible alternative actions that will disappear. If this alternative action is better than plan, then counterplan should be adopted and affirmative's plan should not be adopted.