

PROTEST PROCEDURES - elimination rounds may differ

The Optimist Brain Bowl makes every effort to make sure that our Readers are trained and understand the rules. We purchase the questions from an outside source for our competitions. The questions are previewed by committee members before the event, but some questions with “errors/issues” occasionally slip by. We know that this competition is important to your students, but please remember that our officials are volunteers.

The committee’s duty is to provide a fair competition and we recognize that providing fairness to the majority may not always mean fairness to a particular team. For this reason, rules and guideline for protests have been put into place. In all cases, teams should attempt to promptly resolve issues in the competition room, while both teams and the officials are present, before filing a formal protest. Our first question during a formal protest will be “Did you make an attempt to resolve this issue during the competition round?” And we will have to know specifics, like round, room, question, question number, and preferably the Reader’s name.

There are two reasons to protest the outcome of a particular question.

1. Irreconcilable dispute regarding the Reader’s handling of a question.

When a Reader recognizes a mistake in the way a question has been posed to the teams, that Reader and officiating team will make every effort to make it good during the round. Questions *may* be thrown out and new, alternate questions asked in their stead.

2. Questions with wrong, or unrecognized multiple answers.

In most cases the Reader is looking for a specific person, place, number or formal term. Where more than one answer has been deemed acceptable prior to the tournament, those answers are noted on the Reader’s answer sheets. Issues regarding wrong or multiple answers that cannot be resolved before leaving the competition room may be brought to the protest room. Coaches should be prepared to provide reasonable proof (NOT Wikipedia!). Disputed answers will not be researched by the officials beyond the use of a dictionary.

Procedures:

- Issues regarding competition questions/answers should be left until the round’s end to keep on schedule.
- Issues regarding procedures/Readers should be mentioned when they occur.
- Teams should ATTEMPT to resolve all issues with the judges before signing the score sheet and leaving the room. Please keep in mind that judges have been instructed to resolve issues quickly and move on. The round is complete when teams have signed off. This allows the competition to continue.
- If a protest is contemplated, inform the other team and the Reader before the next round.
- **Unresolved issues may be brought to the score room for formal protest by the “coach” only, not teams.** Please make sure we have the correct name of your coach/representative in the morning before the start.
- Each issue must be brought to the score room immediately after the round effected and before the next round ends. In order to keep the competition moving, Score Room officials must be able to close out rounds in a timely manner. We cannot revisit “old” round scores and still keep the competition on time.
- The “coach” must fill out a protest form outlining the issue before speaking with the protest officials, including the specifics and the perceived issue.
- The official will speak with the “coach” to make sure he/she understands the issue and then will speak with the Reader and officials in the competition room, if necessary.
- The “coach” should return to learn the outcome of the protest in a later round after the protest officials have had time to consider and proceed. The decisions of the protest officials are final.

Issues brought forward that cannot be substantiated will result in no change of score. Frivolous and repeated protests will not be entertained. The protest procedure is not the place to accrue competition points.

Opinions regarding the qualifications or effectiveness of specific Readers should be noted on the Coaches Evaluation and not brought to the score room during the competition, unless there is a problem. We encourage you to give us feedback to help us improve the Readers and the competition. Opinions on questions *can* be given to the protest room.