

[JAMAICA DEBATES COMMISSION -- LEADERS DEBATE 2007]

DEBATES' FORMAT

The debates shall be “made for television”, meaning that they will run as a TV programme would.

The format will be as follows:

1. Each debate shall be 90 minutes in duration.
2. Debates will commence at 9.00PM
3. There will be three commercial breaks of two minutes duration at 20-minutes, 45 minutes and 70 minutes in the debates;
4. Debaters will have 2 minute opening statement after the introductory comments of the moderator;
5. Debaters can read their opening statements although it is preferred if they do not.
6. Debaters will also each have closing remarks, of one minute's duration.
7. Debaters should arrive at the decision on who speaks first by the spinning of a toss an hour prior to the debate; the person winning the toss will determine who gives the first opening statement. Whomever gives the opening statements will yield to the opposing person having the final say when it gets to closing statements.

8. A moderator will guide the flow of the debate, assisted by a time keeper and guided by the instructions of a producer;
9. A panel of two others journalists will join the moderator in asking questions of the debaters.
10. The moderator will have the latitude to raise follow up questions at any time and to allow follow up questions at any time.
11. Debaters will be asked to stand for the duration of the debate, but can sit during breaks, as long as the floor manager concurs at the time that this is ok.
12. Debaters can consult their support team during the breaks but support teams must leave the stage 30 seconds clear of start of a segment or at any time on the instruction of the floor manager;
13. Each debater will be allowed three support persons who can consult during the debate.
14. Debates will be on specific topics, and any question relating to those areas will be allowed as being relevant.
15. Debaters will have 90 seconds to answer each question. Each debater will be allowed 45 seconds to rebut the answer of the question given by the debater to whom the question was posed.
16. If a debater chooses, s/he can combine answers as a means of further rebuttal, but ignoring an entire question to further rebut an answer previously given is not allowed.

17. Debaters are not allowed to ask questions of the moderator and questioners except in a rhetorical manner.
18. Debaters must be at the venue at least one hour prior to the start of the debate.
19. Debaters are advised to wear non-striped material as this will look dazzling on TV which is distracting. Too much white should also be avoided.
20. A studio audience will be allowed made up of 100 persons that shall be comprised of 25 persons invited by either debater, 25 invited by sponsor and 25 persons invited by the National Debates' Commission.
21. The audience is not allowed to participate except through applause at breaks or as cued by the floor manager.
22. Camera shots of the audience will not be done except when going to breaks or returning from them.
23. Members of the audience are not allowed to wear material branded in support of anyone.
24. During the debate, reaction shots in the audience will not be shown.
25. One reaction shot of no longer than 5 seconds is allowed of the debater not answering the question posed. This shall be a close up shot.
26. Debaters are allowed to speak to the audience, but the audience is restricted from responding.
27. The countdown of time to answer each question, rebut or make opening/closing statements will be displayed for the debaters to see.

28. Debaters are to refer to their opponents courteously by name (not as Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition).

29. Towards the end of the debate, both debaters will be allowed to ask their opponent one question of their choosing, to which they are both obliged to give an answer within 45 seconds. The answer given in this case can be rebutted but in no longer than 30 seconds.