

teams who fail to provide one will be marked very harshly. The purpose of an extension is not to redefine the motion or to propose a new course of action. It is to give a new reason for following the proposal presented by First Affirmative.

Neither of the third speakers should ignore the material that has gone before; they should use it and respond to it as they see fit. Nevertheless, they should make clear that they are doing more than just nodding assent to the arguments the first teams have presented; after all, in theory at least, these arguments should now be fully supported and be ready to stand on their own.

Completely changing the direction of the debate with, in effect, a new definition (this is nicknamed “knifing” the opening Affirmative team) is usually heavily penalized. In exceptional circumstances, where a debate has been extremely confused or of a very low standard, adjudicators will accept that the Third Affirmative had no choice but to either knife her colleagues or follow them into third or fourth place, but it’s a risky strategy and best avoided unless you are very confident that you are in the right.

Moving Toward the Endgame

Soon the time will come when the case needs to be handed over to the final speakers to be polished up and presented in its best possible light. To do that, the final speakers need to receive a debate that should have met the following conditions:

- Both sides have clearly explained their mutually exclusive positions.
- Each side has presented arguments in support of those positions and supported those arguments with evidence.
- No substantial questions remain to be answered about either side’s case.
- The Affirmative has demonstrated that a move away from the status quo would have clear benefits in addressing a particular concern and has given reasonable grounds to believe that such a change is possible.
- The Negative has challenged the likelihood of realizing those benefits and has suggested that either the status quo or some other alternative would be preferable and given reasons why this might be the case.

Or,