

comments were made about a debate in general. Since you were the common factor in them all, they may well be suggesting an area that you should look to develop. It's much quicker to learn from the experience of others than it is to make all possible mistakes yourself and learn from those. The views of adjudicators often reflect their experience of other debates, so using that experience can prevent you from forming bad habits.

By listening to the explanation of the decision, you will increase your understanding of what adjudicators are looking for. This may change slightly from judge to judge and panel to panel, but not much. As a result, over time you should be able to gain insight into:

- What generally impresses adjudicators and, by contrast, what doesn't tend to grab their attention. You should remember both of these when structuring and delivering speeches in the future.
- What a particular judge focuses on. If you debate for any length of time, you're likely to run into the same adjudicators. Knowing that one really focuses on clear introductions and another likes to see speakers get straight into the clash of the debate can be useful.

Listening to the Decision

Adjudicators are human and so make mistakes. However, they also see a debate from a perspective that is quite different from that of the competitors. After all, the job of the debater is to be partisan and impassioned; the job of the adjudicator is to be impartial and objective. For either—and sometimes both—of these reasons, the result of the debate may be quite different from the one you and your teammates were expecting. In such a circumstance, don't argue the verdict with the adjudicator (note to parents, partners, and friends of debaters who may be reading this—this applies to you, too). The adjudicator may well be right, and she can't change her decision in any case. Most obviously, it's really not worth annoying someone who may be judging you later in the competition; although adjudicators shouldn't hold a grudge, they are, as mentioned, only human.

Conclusion

There are many excellent reasons for an involvement in debating. However, if your only focus is winning, then you may well be wasting your time, and you're certainly missing the point. Winning a debate is good, winning a competition is better. Winning loads of them is fantastic. Congratulations, you're a megastar! However, long after the trophies