

Procedure for “Blind” Ballot Push

When a potential judge comes to the table, the ballot push worker will turn over the top ballot from an upside-down stack and show the ballot to the judge to ask them if they are able to judge that round and/or are free from any conflicts with either team or clubs, as listed in the General Judging Guidelines. The ballot push worker should not look at the ballot before showing it to the potential judge. Once the ballot is presented, both the ballot push worker and the potential judge can view it at the same time.

If the judge cannot take the ballot that is turned over and put in front of them, then that ballot is set aside. The next ballot on top is then turned over and the procedure starts over. This continues until there is a ballot that the person can judge. If after showing the judge 8 ballots, they still cannot judge a round, the judge should be directed to line up for a different debate event if they desire, or be thanked for their willingness to judge and allowed to leave. The ballots that are rejected are placed upside down on the bottom of the stack.

Goals for Ballot Push and how a Blind Push meets these goals:

- 1) To distribute ballots randomly with the least amount of human intervention. The ballots come from the tab room in a random order and a blind push allows for the distribution of ballots in that order.
- 2) To minimize the amount of information that goes out in advance of public knowledge. By showing one ballot at a time, this is better achieved. Neither side of the ballot push table is being exposed to more information than necessary.
- 3) To create an atmosphere of trust and harmony. When both sides of the ballot push table see the ballot at the same time, there is not a feeling of “choosing” or “holding back”.
- 4) To make the procedure as speedy and efficient as possible. Decisions are made quickly as each ballot is exposed. Time is saved since the ballot push staff is not assessing which ballot they should pick for the parent standing in line.

Philosophy of Blind Ballot Administration: “Assuming the best versus assuming the worst”

- 1) We need to assume the best of judges and trust their hearts.**
- 2) We need to assume the best of the ballot push staff and trust their hearts.**

It is important to acknowledge that both sides of the table could use their position and knowledge for the benefit or detriment of certain competitors. On both sides of the ballot push table, information regarding pairings for upcoming rounds is exposed. We need to create and assume an atmosphere of trust.

There is a Stoa standard that those dealing with any area involving ballot information, should keep ALL information completely confidential. Workers who are pushing ballots need to uphold that standard as well as potential judges looking at and receiving ballots.

When a blind ballot procedure is followed, it increases trust on both sides. A potential judge sees the ballot at the same time as the ballot push worker. A judge is being trusted to not judge a round that they shouldn't judge. Only the judge knows if they have ill motives. Only the judge knows if they can be unbiased. The decision to take a ballot is now between God and the judge, not between the judge and the ballot push worker.

The potential judge needs to be trusted that if they see some information that is not yet publicly available, they are going to keep that information confidential. The ballot push staff needs to be trusted the same way--even though they have most likely seen ballots with information regarding their children or club. Everyone is in the same boat.

When the ballot push staff is totally blind as to the ballot turned over for a potential judge, it demonstrates to the judge pool that staff thinks the best of the judge and really does appreciate their judging.