Judging Philosophy – Katie Lavelle

I think that I’m pretty open to a lot of arguments in debate rounds. By default, I am a policymaker, but if you want the round to be evaluated otherwise, please establish some paradigm. Outside of some morally repugnant positions (racism/sexism good, SPARK), it is up to the debaters to determine which issues are important. Consequently, I think it is important for debaters, especially in the last two rebuttals to have overviews to set up a framework to evaluate the debate. (i.e., performance outweighs policy). The more impact calculation and explanation the debaters do, the less of my own preferences will influence the outcome of the debate. This standard seems to be the most fair, you all are debating, and you should tell me how to evaluate the debate. Below are some preferences on specific positions:

**Flow:** I will try to keep the most attentive flow possible. Vocal variety and attention to enunciation tend to help me in this process. Be clear, and be specific.

**Cross-Ex** I love good cross-examinations. Cross-ex is a great time for you to set up links, find inconsistencies, and to assess the quality of your opponents’ evidence. Make sure that cross-examination is a period of investigation, not a time to grandstand about some argument you forgot to make, or excessively interrupt your partner. Tag team is ok, if you’re in trouble, but don’t overuse it. If cross-ex gets to the point where everyone is talking, any strategic value is lost in the din of discussion.

**Evidence** – I tend to read the cards that are highlighted as critical (important link cards, impact ev, etc). Make sure you identify and explain the evidence you think is important. Highlighting does not mean, our Churchill evidence is fantastic, and then handing me all 10 Churchill cards that you read after the round.) If you want me to read every card, what’s the point of me listening to you all talk for 2 hours? (Evidence comparisons should be done throughout the debate, tell me why your evidence is superior to your opponents’. ***I have judged at a lot of tournaments this year, but I have not researched the topic specific literature much because I’m trying to finish my master’s degree by May. Consequently, if you are running a new case or something, don’t assume that I will know all of the specifics of your position.

**Theory:** I don’t have any strong predispositions on theory debates. If you are going to win it in front of me, make sure that you don’t drop any of your opponent’s arguments and be sure to impact the debate early. Please don’t be overly blippy on this debate, because if I miss your fragment of an argument, it makes the debate very difficult to resolve. Make sure that you explain why you would look at theory before other issues in the round.

**Topicality** I am not as big of a T fan as my boss, Ben Voth. However, I do think topicality is a great negative weapon, especially on such a broad topic. I think topicality is determined by who has the best interpretation. For example, if you have a card that specifically talks about Indian
Country, versus a definition from Words and Phrases, explain why the first definition is superior. You should demonstrate specific in-round abuse, and discuss ground loss. Don’t just whine about abuse, ARTICULATE what you can and cannot run. Be sure to explain the significance of your standards and impact why topicality is a voter.

**Counterplans** – Counterplans are great. Make sure that you articulate the net benefits of the counterplan, and explain how it competes with the affirmative plan. Dispositional and conditional counterplans are fine, as long as you can debate the theory. I am not a fan of multiple counterplans and new counterplans in the 2NC.

**Disadvantages** – The only standard I have for disadvantages that may be unusual is that I don’t want to read all of your evidence post round. Instead of reading 6 uniqueness cards that say the same thing, cut a few out and tell me why your evidence is better or assumes your opponents arguments. Make sure that you assess probability of your impacts in relation to the affirmative take-outs and turns.

**Kritiks** – As a debater, I did not run a lot of kritiks. Many people make the assumption that because I didn’t run them much as a debater, I won’t vote for them. I don’t think that is true, but I’m definitely not a kritik-hack. In order to win a kritik in front of me I think you should articulate how your opponent’s discourse or evidence makes them link to the kritik. Reading evidence is great, but if you never tell me why the other team should lose because of the kritik, I probably won’t vote for the position. I would prefer a kritik debate with more explanation than a kritik debate with lots and lots of evidence. Be sure to explain the implication of the kritik. If you are serious about a kritik, just run one. I think that multiple kritiks in a debate can get really messy, and also gives the affirmative leeway on the performative contradiction.

**Performance/Irony** – I have judged 5 rounds that were performance based and have voted for it once. I am not opposed to this type of debate, what has bothered me most about these types of rounds is that often clash gets ignored, or, neither side establishes a criteria I should follow to evaluate the debate. If you run these types of arguments, just like any other round, make sure that you set up a framework to evaluate these arguments. What does my ballot mean if I vote for your performance in the round?

I hope that this sheet is helpful. Have fun and be nice in the round!