The most important things when debating in front of me are to make smart arguments and capitalize on what you are winning in the debate. Explanation concerning why the arguments you dropped are less important than the arguments they dropped is also essential. Most of the time I will make my decision based upon a good 2AR/2NR story or way to evaluate the round. So please have one! In my opinion, especially good 2NR/2AR's take into account what happens if you lose some of the arguments in the debate. I like clean debates where the arguments I am voting for are fully developed instead of just constantly extended using tag lines.

As far as types of arguments, I cannot say that there are any I will not vote for, but I prefer political debates, counter plans with good net benefits, and well explained critiques. I would not consider myself a critique friendly judge, but I will definitely vote on them provided they are explained well and have a good link to the specific affirmative. I like a good topicality debate as much as anyone, but in order for the negative to win topicality they need to be able to show ground loss or have some other particularly persuasive reason why they are being abused.

Speed is fine as long as you're clear. You will get much better speaker points if your arguments are long enough for me to write them down instead of two hundred two word blips. Cross-Examination is an essential part of a good debate. Please try to ask some questions and maybe even make a few arguments instead of just cleaning up your flow and asking for evidence.

Other than that have fun and be nice to each other. Feel free to ask me any specific questions before the round begins.
The main thing you should know about me is that the execution of the argument is almost as important as the quality of the argument. A really good disad with good cards that is poorly explained and poorly extended is not very compelling to me. Also there are certain words that are value laden for me. These include but are not limited to turn, moral imperative, deontology, and decision rule. These words and phrases should sound alarm bells in your mind when you hear them because if you drop these kinds of arguments you are going to lose. That doesn’t mean you should stand up and say “turn --the disad is stupid which is a deontological moral imperative” and expect to win. But these are phrases that are value laden in our community as well as in my mind and you need to be on top of this kind of stuff.

As to other preferences, I am a pretty critique friendly judge. I will fairly listen to and evaluate critiques and have found myself voting on critiques an awful lot this year. If your K is not mainstream you will need to explain it to me. I am also less prone than other judges to vote on topicality. Although I do take a fairly strict view of the topic and am willing to enforce that view when teams do a good job of arguing topicality. One thing I should say about Topicality though is that in order for the negative to win, they need to be able to articulate the specific ground they are losing due to the affirmative’s interpretation.

I probably err slightly neg. on most theory issues except those ending in spec, though I have voted aff. alot on things like PIC’s bad, etc. so I am not terribly biased. Arguments like “USFG is too vague” or “You misspelled enforcement and that’s a VI” are most likely non-starters. Theory arguments are generally too underdeveloped for my tastes so if that is your big strategy invest some time.

Other than that speed is fine as long as you’re clear. Evidence is extremely important. I have noticed a disturbing trend towards people reading short cards with little or no explanation in them. If your cards suck you’re in trouble. Also if your cards suck you can pretty much mail it in that your points are going to suck too.

Cross examination is very important. Cross-ex should be more than I need this card and what is your third answer to X. A good cross-ex will dramatically increase your points, a bad one will hurt them.

Everyone in the debate should be courteous. Rude behavior will only be tolerated if it is really funny and I am the judge of that.
Kristen Reid  
Pepperdine University  
Rounds judged on topic: 40

I really feel that debate should be an activity for debaters not for judges. I want debaters to feel comfortable running the positions that they like in front of me. I want you to have a good time in the round. However, there are some things that you should take into account.

I really dislike theory debates. I understand the importance it has in a round but I almost never vote on it. If you feel you have to make theoretical arguments and, even worse, if you decide to go for them you really need to have proven abuse in the round. You also need to spend a lot of your time on it.

I tend to vote affirmative on topicality a lot. Much like a theory debate you need to prove in round abuse for me to vote negative on topicality. You also need to make sure that you are warranting your arguments. A lot of topicality arguments become very repetitive and blippy and I find those arguments very difficult to vote for. Once again, if you are going to go for topicality in your last speech you need to spend a lot of time on it.

I am fine with all of the mainstream kritik arguments. However, I was in large part a politics debater so if you are running a kritik you should take a little extra time to slow down a little and explain the argument in detail. Particularly you should spend time discussing how the impact of the kritik affects the round, my ballot, the case, etc. Also make sure that the link story is clear. I believe that a kritik debate should be very in depth so you will lose speaker points for going for a kritik when all you are doing is repeating tag lines and key phrases.

As far as all the experimental, performance-based, kritiks of the form of debate, etc. go I have had a hard time voting for them this year. While I really have enjoyed sitting in the back of the room for the discussions I find that all of these arguments leave me with too many questions regarding how I sign my ballot for me to feel comfortable voting for them.

Lastly, I am a first year judge and I find that the less intervention I have to make at the end of the round the better it is for everybody involved. Thus, you should do really good impact comparisons in your last speeches. Account for the possibility that you are losing some aspect of the debate and engage in some even-if analysis. Make sure that you are warranting your arguments and making on point comparisons for why you are better than the other team. Tell me where you want me to vote first and explain why. The more directed analysis you give me for how you want me to sign the ballot the happier you and I will be.

Have a great time and good luck!