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Coaches' Bulletin



Submit questions to:
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Propaganda

Q1 At our local tournament, **Section C** included this example: **Ad for Proactive acne cream: "Katy Perry, singer/songwriter. What's the secret to her success? She's Proactive. Proactiv helps clear and prevent skin blemishes."**

I thought this was Status because singer/songwriter is not a title. But the answer was Degrees and Titles, meaning that singer/songwriter must be a title. My thought is that singer/songwriter is certainly an opinion. If I sing in the shower and work on rhymes for rap songs, I'm a singer/songwriter. Now, if the example said Grammy Winning singer/songwriter, I could see degrees and titles. (Steve Wright, MI)

A1 The *Propaganda Guide* lists these examples as Titles of Attainment: "Professor, Doctor, Harvard graduate, champion, pro football player, award winner, record setter, astronaut, sportscaster, physicist." Under "Examples that are *not* true Titles," we have: "star of a hit television series, business leader, basketball legend, most feared slugger, famous model, comedian, TV host (TV personality)." A lead-in sentence to this list says, "*Descriptions based on opinion are not considered titles* in the sense of this technique."

So the question is which of the two categories applies to "singer/songwriter"? Notice that the Titles of Attainment all require a college degree (e.g., Professor, Doctor, physicist) or being selected for a team or group (pro football player, astronaut, sportscaster), or winning an award or setting a record. Does "singer/songwriter" involve any of those achievements? Anyone can call themselves a "singer/songwriter" by writing a song and singing it. But Katy Perry has had her songs selected for recording by a music company. So the consensus was that singer/songwriter in this case is a Title of Attainment. Also, the *Guide* says that, if a title is given, Degrees & Titles is the answer even if the person is well known.

Q2 One of my students asked for clarification on this example of Drawing the Line in the *Propaganda Guide*.

"Here is my view on a Middle East problem: What is Arab should be Palestinian, and what is Jewish should be Israeli.

"Comment: The speaker draws a line in the sand: Jews on one side, Arabs on the other."

I said that I don't believe this is Causal Oversimplification because the speaker is not offering a simple, single solution that will fix the entire "Middle East problem." The speaker proposes one solution that could fix the issue. The alternative to this solution is that everyone sticks with the current problem. That is implied. No other alternatives are explored.

However, I could argue that the speaker is trying to solve a "problem" with a simplistic solution. The only argument that I have that this is not Causal Oversimplification is that the speaker did not say their solution will fix everything. (Craig Zeller, LA)

A2 The technique is CAUSAL Oversimplification. Drawing the Line often takes the form of SOLUTION Oversimplification. If the speaker said, "The Palestinians are creating the problem in the Middle East because they want to take land from the Israelis," then it would be Causal Oversimplification. Causal Oversimplification can take the form of offering a simplistic solution to a complicated problem. But that is only implicit in this example. What is explicit is drawing a line in the sand.

Equations and On-Sets

Q1 If I am not the goal-setter (in other words, I am on the defense), should I try to prolong the game using a long-winded solution or shorten the game by going to a forceout (by putting cubes in forbidden and looking for the quickest solution)? The situation I am asking about is when I am either tied or losing. If I'm winning, I ascertained that it would be better to take as much time as possible in order to extend my lead and take up time. What should I do in the case mentioned above in which I am either tiec or trailing? (Chancharik Mitra, PA)

A1 You're on the right track in your thinking. The basic philosophy is that it doesn't matter whether you win a match by one point or eight. You get 6 for winning either way.

A1 Continued

When leading in the match, you want to practice KISS - Keep It Simple, Stupid. Play conservatively and don't take chances.

- Pick a simple variation that isn't open ended the way 0 wild or multiple of k are (to limit the interpretations of the Goal as well as the possibilities for Solutions).
- Play as many cubes to Forbidden as you can (which is why, to counter this strategy, we don't allow the person leading the match to make Bonus moves).
- Take as much time as allowed for your moves. When leading, you want the shake to end in a forceout - which is the equivalent of a tie.
- Take the full two minutes for each Equation that is checked after a Challenge or forceout. Even if it is a simple Equation (in part because you played so many cubes to Forbidden), take the full time before accepting an opponent's Equation. There's nothing an opponent can do to stop you. And remember that each Equation must be checked separately. So in a three-way forceout, take two minutes to check one opponent's Equation, then another two minutes to check the other opponent's Equation.

When behind in the match or tied for first, reverse all the strategies above. You want to put pressure on the leader.

- Pick a variation that opens up many possibilities for the leader to consider such as 0 wild or multiple of k (in hopes he will overlook a Solution that you figured out).
- Play quickly. Use bonus moves every turn to put either two cubes in Forbidden or one to Forbidden and one to Required. (Never play to Permitted in Equations.)

Finally, if you're behind in a match by three or more points, you must not allow the last shake to end in a forceout. You can gain only two points on a forceout (4-2).

- Before the last cube in Resources is played to the mat or before the first minute for writing Solutions on a forceout expires, challenge Impossible.
- The exception might be in a three-way team match when you're second at your table and don't want to take a chance of falling to 3rd by making an Impossible challenge that will probably be proved wrong and thereby cost your team two points.

Rules Meetings at Nationals

Several new rules meetings will be held in Orlando in addition to the traditional Equations/On-Sets, Theme/Current Events, and *LinguiSHTIK* meetings.

- The new Propaganda Committee will host a meeting to consider proposals for that game. All Propaganda coaches are invited to attend.
- The new Presidents Committee will also host a meeting that all Presidents coaches are welcome to attend.

If you have a proposal that for one of the game but will not attend Nationals, send it to bngolden1@cox.net and it will be routed to the appropriate chairperson.

Judges Corner: Equations and On-Sets

The most neglected rule in *Equations* (and *On-Sets*) is this one (bold added):

“Opponents have two minutes to check each Equation. When more than one Equation must be checked, they may be checked in any order. In a three-player match, *both* opponents must check a player's Equation during the *same* two minutes. **No other Equation should be checked during this time.**”

Violating this rule is asking for problems. Consider two situations.

- In a two-way match after a forceout, player A is checking player B's Equation while B is checking A. A keeps asking B about B's Equation, thereby disrupting B's checking of A's Equation. In On-Sets, A is moving the cards in the Universe to check B's Solution while B is trying to move the cards to check A's.
- In a three-way match with two Equations presented, suppose players A and B are checking C's Equation. At the same time, C is checking A's without B. When the two minutes expire, either A or B will have a beef. B can protest that he didn't get a chance to check A's Equation. But if B is given a chance to check A's Equation, A can complain that more than two minutes are being devoted to checking her Equation without a -1 penalty being enforced.

How is a judge supposed to straighten out either of the above situations?