

CONTEST MASTER HOW-TO

or How to Be the Center of Attention Without Being the Center of Attention

This is a chronological outline of items to consider when you have been asked to serve as a Contest Master.

These document will hopefully help you to understand:

**the importance of FAIR CONTESTS;
the purpose of the Contest Master;
when to use the Contest Script;
when to embellish the Contest Script
what's NOT in the Contest Script.**

If you have any questions, or need any help, please don't hesitate to ask your Area or Division Governors!

Why do we have Contests?

To provide contest experience & recognize the best speakers.

As a learning experience for all.

Public relations opportunities -
Invite guests to your contest!

What is meant by "FAIR CONTESTS"?

Consistent, identical treatment for all Contestants, as much as is possible.

Which Contests are we having this Spring in District 50?

Tall Tales

International Speech

What is my purpose as Contest Master?

Keep it FAIR

Keep it FUN

Keep it ON TIME

Keep it FOCUSED on the CONTESTANTS

You've been asked to be Contest Master - NOW WHAT?

Your Contest Chair - get his/her name and contact info.

Verify the Day/Date/Time/Location of Contest.

Download the Contest Script.

If possible, review it with your Contest Chair before the Contest.

Is there a theme? If not, it's up to you!

Should you have a Costume? Props?

Remember - keep your material BRIEF!!

There are two places in the Contest for you to "Shine" (warm up the audience/get the energy up)

When you are introduced at the Contest start;

When you start the second half of the Contest.

Additional places to make it lively

The required audience briefings.

Contestant Interviews:

The most interesting for the audience are questions about, or related to, the Contestants' contest speeches.

Ideas/suggestions for Contest introductions

Holiday Stories; Songs; Short Skit;
Inspirational Story
Keep it fun, positive, appropriate.
You're warming the audience up,
NOT providing the main attraction.
Remember - keep it BRIEF!
Write it all down in the Contest Script.

On Contest Day: Dress appropriately! Get there early!

You are part of the Contest Briefing

Meet Chief Judge (get his/her name);
Get speaking order and **practice pronouncing contestant's names & speech titles with them.**
Be familiar with the Contestants' props/stage directions (handled by Sergeants-at-Arms).
Talk with the Timers - make sure they'll time the minutes of silence and the break.
Verify that the Contestants' certificates are ready and in the correct order.

Once the Contest starts:

You'll be introduced after the Dignitaries.
You're on! Present your opening skit/monologue.
Read the Audience Briefing *as presented in the Contest Script* (once you are familiar with it, you can spice it up). "Speech contests are..."
Introduce the Chief Judge:
"Has everyone been briefed?"
Give the speaking order slowly and clearly.

Introduce each speaker the same way

Contestant number (one); contestant's name; speech title; speech title; (turn and extend hand) contestant's name.
DO NOT stumble over names; DO NOT say "first" or "last but not least"; DO NOT show any preference or distinction to any Contestant; remember to keep it FAIR.

While Contestants are speaking...

Be unobtrusive and invisible - sit down in the front row of the audience, if possible.
TAKE NOTES on the Contestant's speech for your interview questions.

When Contestants finish speaking...

Do not anticipate the closing.
Do not favor the speaker in any way - comment, expression, gestures, etc.
Ask for the minute of silence, and for timers to time it, and stand quietly.
Motion for the next contestant to approach the stage (quietly) and for the Sergeant-at-Arms to set up any props.

When last Contestant is finished...

Ask for indefinite silence.
Silently chastise any talkers/whisperers.
Wait patiently until the Chief Judge exits with ballot counters.

Now it's Interview time!!

Call up Contestants (in speaking order) to thunderous applause.

NOTE: Anyone competing in BOTH contests is not interviewed until AFTER they have competed in both contests.

Have your interview notes & the certificates

Ask the expected questions:

What Club (Area) are you representing?
How long have you been in Toastmasters?
What is your Toastmaster's educational level?

Ask one or two personalized questions:

The audience loves to know more about the speech and the contestant - where did the speech come from? Is there more to the story? Try to really give the audience more information about the contestants.

Thank each contestant for competing; present the certificate; shake hand.

Direct the contestant to the end of the line (but keep them on stage).

Finishing Interviews

Applaud all Contestants again, then allow them to step down.

Call for 10 minute break.

Ask Timers to give you a warning when two minutes are left.

During Break

Review your notes/script/names for second contest.

Have certificates and speaking order ready.

LOUDLY alert audience (if SAA does not) at two-minutes-left and at one-minute-left

Open second half of Contest

Warm up the audience again - get them re-energized and ready for the next contest!

Give short audience briefing.

Give speaking order.

Introduce each speaker the same way

Contestant number (one); contestant's name; speech title; (turn and extend hand) contestant's name.

DO NOT stumble over names; DO NOT say "first" or "last but not least"; DO NOT show any preference or distinction to any Contestant; remember to keep it FAIR.

While Contestants are speaking...

Be unobtrusive and invisible - sit down in the front row of the audience, if possible.

TAKE NOTES on the Contestant's speech for your interview questions.

When Contestants finish speaking...

Do not anticipate the closing.

Do not favor the speaker in any way - comment, expression, gestures, etc.

Ask for the minute of silence, and for timers to time it, and stand quietly.

Motion for the next contestant to approach the stage (quietly) and for the Sergeant-at-Arms to set up any props.

When last Contestant is finished...

Ask for indefinite silence (timers do NOT time it).

Silently chastise any talkers/whisperers.

Wait patiently until the Chief Judge exits with ballot counters.

Interview time!!

Call up Contestants (in speaking order)
to thunderous applause;

***Anyone competing in BOTH contests is
interviewed NOW - ask them about both
speeches, the audience wants to know!***

Have your interview notes & the certificates

Ask the expected questions:

What Club (Area) are you representing?
How long have you been in Toastmasters?
What is your Toastmaster's
educational level?

Ask one or two personalized questions:

The audience loves to know more about
the speech and the contestant - where did
the speech come from? Is there more to
the story? Try to really give the audience
more information about the contestants.

Thank each contestant for competing;
present the certificate; shake hand.

Direct the contestant to the end of the
line (but keep them on stage).

Continue for each contestant.

When done, applaud all Contestants again,
then allow them to step down.

After interviews...

Thank Contest helpers:

- Contest Chair (by name)
- Judges (stand for applause)
- Timers, Registration, Sergeants-at-Arms, any other helpers (can be thanked as a group);
- Ballot Counters & Chief Judge (MAY BE OUT OF THE ROOM so might need to be thanked later).

Introduce Area Governor (or Division
Governor at a Division Contest).

Sit down for a bit!

CHIEF JUDGE will hand you results
when they return. If there were any
disqualifications, Chief Judge should
inform you and review procedure.

When you're called back up after District Announcements...

If ballot counters and Chief Judge were
absent earlier, thank them.

Be aware of these rules regarding how
many winners to announce:

*In contests with five or more contestants,
announce third (optional), second & first place.*

*In contests with four or fewer contestants,
announce only second and first place.*

Clearly, slowly, and carefully read the
winners exactly as entered from the
sheet given to you by Chief Judge.

Smile for photos!

Remind everyone of the day/date/time/
location of the next level of competition.

This Contest is ADJOURNED!

Stay for the Contest Debriefing

**AND pat yourself on the back
for a job WELL DONE!**

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

For Combined Contests

Review procedure with Chief Judge.

Clearly announce when contest changes
from one Area to the other.

**Copies of this form and more
are available here:**

www.d50Toastmasters.org

www.Toasties-Stuff.org