

AMCA Rankings

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1 Top Program Rankings

Top program rankings are comprised of two constituent: (1) top oral advocacy programs, and (2) top brief writing programs. We address these in turn.

1.1 Top Oral Advocacy Programs

A straightforward calculation can be done which reflects a balance between size of program and the performance of the program as a whole. In order to accomplish these goals, we can simply multiply a program's percent of total ballots earned at the National Tournament by the percent of possible ballots a team actually won. The calculation for this metric is:

$$\text{Program Oral Advocacy} = (\% \text{ of total national ballots}^1) (\% \text{ of possible ballots})$$

This equation becomes:

$$\text{Program Oral Advocacy} = \left(\frac{\text{program total national ballots}}{\text{total national ballots}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{program total national ballots}}{\text{program total possible ballots}^2} \right)$$

¹“Play-in” rounds from the National Tournament are excluded from this calculation.

² This value is adjusted to accommodate same-school hits.

The above equation provides a balance between program size and program performance. The first fraction provides for contribution of program size towards the total national ballot count. Here, larger programs will likely (though not necessarily) be advantaged. It is possible that the more teams a program enters into the national tournament, no increase in total national ballot count will be seen by that program. This result is unlikely, but possible (e.g., a school that has seven (7) teams in the national tournament could lose every single round on Day 1 and have a numerator of “0.”). Historically, a program that enters a larger number of teams into nationals will—for realistic purposes—have a better chance at taking more ballots than a program that only has a single team at nationals. Thus, this part of the equation accounts for program size.

The second fraction in the above equation is a measure of substantive performance. With this portion of the measure, only the measure of the actual ballots earned against the total opportunity for ballots is considered. Here, smaller teams have parity with larger programs (if not advantaged in some conditions).

1.2 Top Brief Writing Programs

Top brief writing rankings follow a similar calculation to the top oral advocacy rankings. Here, calculating the percent of the total brief writing points obtained from the entire pool of entrant teams, combined with the aggregate performance of each program’s brief submissions, provides a similar measure to oral advocacy rankings.

$$\text{Program Brief Writing} = (\% \text{ of total brief points}) (\% \text{ of possible brief points})$$

This equation becomes:

$$\text{Program Brief Writing} = \left(\frac{\text{program total brief points}}{\text{total national brief points}} \right) \left(\frac{\text{program total brief points}}{\text{program total possible brief points}} \right)$$

The above equation again provides a balance between program size and program performance. The first fraction provides for contribution of program size towards the total brief points. Here, larger programs will likely be advantaged. It is possible that the more teams a program enters into the brief writing competition, no increase in total brief points will be seen by that program. This result is unlikely, however. In actuality, a program that enters a larger number of teams into the brief writing competition will—for realistic purposes—have a better chance at obtaining more points in the brief writing competition. Thus, this part of the equation accounts for program size.

The second fraction in the above equation is a measure of substantive performance. With this portion of the measure, only the measure of the actual brief writing points earned against the total opportunity for brief writing points is considered. For example, a program with only one team in the brief writing competition that earns a 90 point-average on its brief will score higher on this metric than a program with ten teams who enter briefs, but whose teams only average an 80. Here, smaller teams have parity with larger programs. This metric utilizes the same balancing rationale as the oral advocacy measure, and therefore is stylistically similar as well as accommodating to the variance in program sizes (i.e., number of briefs filed by a program).

1.3 Top Programs Calculation

Now that we have the constituent parts to our top program metric, a simple weighting of these constituent parts will tell us the top programs in a combinatorial sense.

AMCA's Board has determined that the combined national ranking will consist of a total ranking which weights the program oral advocacy score as 67% of the combined rankings, while the brief writing program score will contribute 33% of the combined ranking.

The equation for calculating this total program performance score is:

$$\text{Top Program Score} = 67(\text{Program Oral Advocacy Score}) + 33(\text{Program Brief Writing Score})$$