

Tab Staff Best Practices

You can take it as a given that your tournament customers want good, fair tabbing. You, as the Tournament Director, should not be tabbing yourself; you've got other things to do. No doubt there are other folks in your region who will be perfectly good at the job.

These are the rules of thumb that will keep your tournament wheels turning brightly.

- There should be more than one tabber per division. While it's not inconceivable that one person can handle things entirely alone at a smallish event, a helper makes errors less likely, and problem solving (if necessary) more likely.
- Tab staff for any division should be from different schools. This will deflect any suspicion of hanky panky.
- Tab staff should have at least one experienced old hand. While new people have to learn somewhere, you want at least one person in tab who's been there and done that. While the tabroom.com software might look capable of running everything automatically including making change at the concessions table and keeping the debate ziti piping hot, this is just an illusion. Things go wrong. Plus, in complex MJP pairings, simply accepting the computer's decisions may not result in the best set of assignments. Experienced people know how to work with this while inexperienced people simply release less than maximized pairings. And when things go wrong, and tabroom.com tells you "Well, that's just unfortunate," you want someone who can roll up their sleeves and keep things moving.
- Tab should be open to any coach/adult. Things happen, and questions arise, and attendees ought to feel free to discuss them.

And aside from the need for quiet and calm during an actual pairing, there should be nothing about the pairings that shouldn't be open to auditors.

- Tab should be closed to students. If students have an issue, it should be communicated through their coaches, except in cases of medical emergencies or the like. The last thing a tab room needs is some PF team whining about their judge's decision—that's the coach's job.
- Your tab staff is the engineering team at your tournament, not the decision makers. While it is extremely likely that you'll want the advice of your presumably experienced tab staff if an issue arises, it is the Tournament Director who is in charge of the tournament, and who should be the one to make the difficult decisions. Examples might be as simple as granting a double bye due to a sketchy judge situation or as serious as evicting a team from the tournament due to cheating. Those are things the TD needs to do, with full knowledge and authority. Tab, although their device is valuable, is there to get the pairings out.
- Competent, experienced tab staff can serve as an advertisement for your tournament. Attendees want people they can trust not only to be fair but to be fast and efficient. Tab staff with good reputations can drive business your way, so feel free to mention them in your invitation.