



When You Are the Contest Toastmaster

Here are some tips that will add finesse to your next Contest Toastmaster opportunity.

Before the Contest

1. **Dress for Success.** As Contest Toastmaster, you are in charge for the next hour-and-a-half. Wear a suit or even a tuxedo.
2. **Use a Theme.** Warm up the audience with a light hearted theme that lends itself to humor and spontaneity. Focus attention on the speakers, and take care not to overshadow them.
3. **Practice Pronunciations.** Practice pronouncing each speaker's name and speech title. Confirm these with each speaker at the contestants meeting.
4. **Frame Certificates of Participation.** – Make sure the contestants will know how important their participation is at this level of the contest series.

During the Contest

5. **Announce all speakers as “The Next Speaker...”** Treat speakers equally. Avoid introductions such as “our first speaker...” or “our final speaker...”
6. **Do not announce the minute of silence** (between speakers). As part of your opening comments, advise the audience to be silent between speeches. Have the timers clock 1 minute and provide a signal.
7. **Announce that an *indefinite period of silence will follow the final speech*** during your opening remarks. Prior to the contest, instruct ballot counters to remain seated for one minute following the final speech before ballot collection.
8. **Have Speakers Queue Up.** Pick a spot in the room. Once the microphone is in place, all speakers walk forward from the same designated location in the room.
9. **Announce the next speaker when the microphone is ready.** There are times when it will take additional time to attach and adjust the microphone.
10. **Remain standing until the speaker acknowledges you.** Introduce the speaker, then stand by your seat (off stage) and await the acknowledgement during the opening sentence of the speech.

During the Interviews

11. **Have an assistant queue up bios and certificates.** Avoid paper shuffling/confusion.
12. **Call each contestant forward individually recalling the name of the speech.** (Avoid the *police line-up!*) Instead invite each speaker forward individually by recalling the name of the speech. “*Please welcome to the stage Jane Doe, “My Summer Vacation.”* [Applause as the contestant comes forward to the stage. The contestant returns to his/her seat following the interview.]
13. **Keep contestant interviews crisp and entertaining.** The routine might include asking the speaker to: identify relevant club information, answer one or two interesting questions, and if there is anyone he/she would like to acknowledge. Sincerely thank and recognize the speaker for participating.