

American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet Manual



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Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet Manual**

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Competition Objectives

As a leadership training and self-improvement activity, the Discussion Meet experience will:

- Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information;
- Promote a concise and direct manner of speaking;
- Improve the ability to listen;
- Aid the participant in overcoming timidity or stage fright;
- Assist the individual in the practice of giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner;
- Teach the value of compromise; and
- Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.

Background Information

The Discussion Meet is a competition promoted by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Young Farmers & Ranchers (YR&R) Committee.

Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The competition is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.

Applicants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

A successful applicant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. He/she will assist the group in creating ways to implement the solutions discussed and highlight Farm Bureau's involvement in those actions/steps.

The applicants will discuss pre-selected topics using four bases for the general discussion:

- Cooperation
- Constructive Criticism
- Problem Solving
- Communication

It is recommended that state Farm Bureaus provide, as part of the state recognition award, an expenses-paid trip to the AFBF Annual Convention held in 2017 in Phoenix, Arizona. Appropriate recognition will be given to all the national competitors in attendance at the AFBF Annual Convention.

The AFBF YF&R Committee and the AFBF Organization Department will coordinate the program at the national level.

Eligibility

- Applicant shall be a Farm Bureau member between the ages of 18 and 35 in good standing with his/her county Farm Bureau. The individual shall have reached his/her 18th birthday at the time he/she qualifies for the national competition and shall not have reached his/her 36th birthday by Jan. 31, 2017.
- Applicant must be actively engaged in agriculture.
- Applicant may only compete in one national YF&R Competition per year.
- Past and present members of the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and/or their spouse are not eligible to compete.
- Past state YF&R Discussion Meet winners and/or previous AFBF Discussion Meet competitors are not eligible to compete.
- Current employees of county, state and/or American Farm Bureaus and their affiliates are not eligible to compete.
- Professional speakers are not eligible to compete. Professional speakers are those who have received a fee, royalty or honorarium for speaking (i.e., paid speaking appearances or speaking engagements) within 24 months prior to this annual competition. This excludes reimbursement for travel or expenses attendant to the appearance.
- Each state may submit one entry to be considered for national recognition and must use the AFBF entry form and application.

Helpful Hints for Competitors

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: Internet; library; newspapers; magazines; Farm Bureau policies; county, state and American Farm Bureau publications; and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- Remember this is a discussion, not a debate.
- Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions, and urge others to be specific.
- Be aware of the audience, but generally address the panel. Speak loudly enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- The discussion should not be “conversation” or aimless talk, nor should you take the role of a persuasive speaker. Try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.
- This is not a panel symposium wherein each participant, in turn, makes a presentation, with the moderator ending the session with a summary. Rather, it is an exercise in cooperative problem solving, with the questions, answers and statements coming from any person at any time. The moderator plays an inactive role during the discussion.
- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in your summary statement.
- Use the one minute of quiet time to organize your closing statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques and stay within the time limit.

Competition Format

1. All competition facilitators and competitors will meet in the pre-assigned competition room 15 minutes prior to the start of the competition to receive last-minute comments by the room chair. At this time competitors will also draw for order for placement of their name tent/chair. Competitors not present at the time of the drawing will select from the remaining position. The competition facilitators are AFBF-designated room chairs and moderators.
2. Competitors may not take prepared notes in any form with them to the competition table. After all competitors have been introduced, notes may be written on the paper provided. If a note is brought to the table and is noticed by the competition facilitator, there will be a disqualification called at the end of the round by the Discussion Meet chair, the AFBF YF&R Committee chair and/or the AFBF coordinator.
3. Discussion Meet questions will not be provided at the competition table during national level rounds of competition.
4. The room chair will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed and introduce the timekeeper and moderator. Any competitor not present at this time will be disqualified.
5. The moderator will introduce the competitors and re-announce the topic to be discussed. He/she will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a 30-second opening statement directed to the audience.
6. The timekeeper will flash a red time card indicating when 30 seconds have elapsed. Judges may subtract points at their discretion for competitors who abuse the time limit.
7. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion, which will continue for a total of 25 minutes during the opening rounds and Sweet Sixteen round and 30 minutes during the Final Four round. The discussion should be directed to the fellow competitors.
8. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains. If the discussion is lagging, the moderator may close the discussion at this time.
9. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 25 minutes in the opening rounds and Sweet Sixteen rounds and 30 minutes in the Final Four round have elapsed with a red time card. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop for one minute of quiet time, allowing the competitors to compose a closing statement.
10. The moderator will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed to the audience.
11. The moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room with the room chair to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges are not to confer with each other until the room chair has collected their tabulated score sheets.
12. The next round topic to be discussed will be announced (with the exception of the Final Four question). The Final Four question will be announced at the official Final Four Announcement.
13. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. He/she will then ask the competitors to share their personal agricultural background with the audience.

Competition Structure

Orientations

- Discussion Meet Competitor Orientation
 - a) Orientation will be held prior to the opening round of competition.
 - b) All participants are required to attend; roll call will be taken.
 - c) The opening round topic will be announced.
 - The first round topic will be announced now, and again in the competition room.
 - Each subsequent round topic will be announced at the close of the prior round, with the exception of the final question. The Final Four question will be announced at the official Final Four Announcement.
 - d) Opening round room assignments and locations will be distributed.

- Judge Orientation
 - a) Orientation will be held prior to the opening round of competition.
 - b) All judges are required to attend; roll call will be taken.
 - c) Judges' duties will be reviewed (see **Judge Duties**) and any announcements will be made.
 - d) Competition timing sequences will be reviewed.
 - e) There will be time for judges to ask questions.
 - f) Opening round room assignments and locations will be distributed.

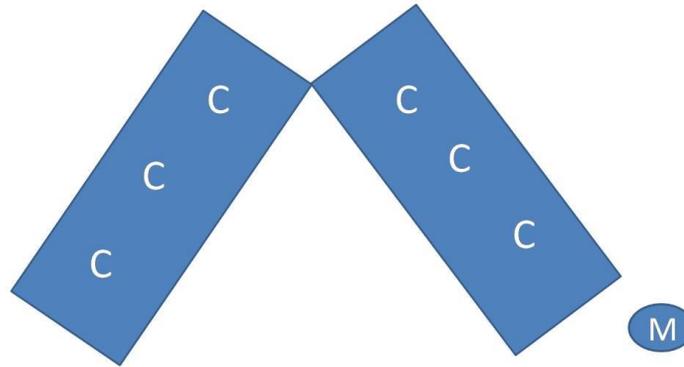
- Timekeeper Orientation
 - a) Orientation will be held prior to the opening round of competition.
 - b) All timekeepers are required to attend; roll call will be taken.
 - c) Opening round room assignments and locations will be distributed.
 - d) Timekeeper duties will be reviewed (see **Timekeeper Duties**) and any announcements will be made.

Competition

- All participants will compete in the first two rounds of the competition. Each of the first two rounds will include rooms with four to six competitors. The top 16 competitors based on judges' scores from the first two rounds will be put into a Sweet Sixteen round. The Sweet Sixteen round will have four rooms with four competitors each, with the top competitor in each room moving on to the final round. The four finalists will compete in the Final Four round to determine the winner.

- The physical arrangements of the Discussion Meet rooms should provide for two tables at the front of the room facing each other and the audience. Half the participants should be seated at each table with the moderator on the side. Name cards identifying competitors should be easily visible. Cards should show only the competitor's name, not his or her state. Placement of name cards will be determined by a drawing for order 15 minutes prior to the start of the round. Competitors not present at the time of the drawing will select from the remaining position.

Room Layout



```

x J x x x x x x x T   x x x x x x x x x
x x x x x x x x x x   x x x x x x J x x x
x x x x x x x J x x   x x x x x x x x x
  
```

M = Moderator C = Competitor J = Judge T = Timer X = Audience

Competition Flow

Generally speaking, the discussion should follow these steps:

1. State the problem or need.
2. Explore, define and understand the problem or need.
3. Identify causes of the problem or need.
4. Elaborate all possible alternative solutions.
5. Evaluate and compare alternatives.
6. Test and project what appears to be the best solution(s).
7. Create ways to implement the solution(s) discussed and highlight Farm Bureau's involvement in those actions/steps.

Roles and Responsibilities of Competition Facilitators

1. Discussion Meet Chair Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Prior to orientations, determine the sequence of topics to be used for the competition.
- c) Conduct the Discussion Meet Competitor Orientation session.
 1. Make introductions.
 2. Give a brief explanation of Discussion Meet competition procedures.
 3. Distribute room assignments and locations.
 4. Allow time for questions.
 5. Announce the first round topic during orientation.
- d) Settle any and all disputes during the competition.

2. Room Chair Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Review the Tally Sheet. (see **Appendix A & B**)
- c) Ensure all judges are present and report any changes to the moderator.
- d) Meet in the assigned room with competitors, judges, moderator and timekeeper to answer any questions they may have.
- e) Facilitate the drawing for order and placement of name tents, fifteen minutes prior to the start of the competition.
- f) Call the competition to order at the appointed time. Introduce the moderator and announce the topic to be discussed.
- g) Following the discussion, introduce and thank the judges.
- h) Escort the judges to the judges' tabulating room at the end of the competition and allow them to finish tabulating and ranking the participants. Assist with the final ranking if necessary.
- i) Ensure each competitor has been ranked in all sections of the rating sheet.
- j) Supervise tiebreakers. (see **Scoring**)

3. Moderator Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Become acquainted with the competitors.
- c) Open the competition with the following to ensure that all understand the format:
 1. Welcome the audience.
 2. Introduce the participants from left-to-right by name.
 3. Announce the topic to be discussed.
 4. Ask for the competitors to make a 30-second opening statement, in voluntary order.
 5. After the last opening statement, say, "You have heard the opening statements. You may proceed with the discussion."
 6. End the discussion at timekeeper's signal.
 7. Call for one minute of quiet time for the competitors to prepare their closing statements.
 8. Ask for the competitors to make a one-minute closing statement, in a voluntary order.
 9. Thank the competitors.
 10. Dismiss the room chair and judges for tabulation.
 11. Announce the topic for the next round (with the exception of the Final Four question).
 12. Give the competitors the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their agriculture background.
 13. Announce the time and location(s) for the next round.

Note: The moderator should not comment on the topic or encourage discussion. This is the responsibility of the competitors. However, if the discussion seems to stall, the moderator should use his/her best judgment to end the discussion when the timekeeper indicates five minutes remain in open discussion.

4. **Timekeeper Duties**

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Go to your assigned competition room 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- c) Meet with the room chair, moderator and competitors for last-minute questions.
- d) Make sure to be seated in the front row near the center.
- e) Indicate the following timing points to the moderator and competitors:

Two Opening Rounds and Sweet Sixteen

- The end of each 30-second opening statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- Warning at 20 minutes of open discussion, holding the card up until all competitors have noted the warning. (Five Minutes Remaining – Yellow Card)
- The end of 25 minutes of open discussion (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of one minute of quiet time (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card)

Final Four

- The end of each 30-second opening statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- Warning at 25 minutes of open discussion, holding the card up until all competitors have noted the warning. (Five Minutes Remaining – Yellow Card)
- The end of 30 minutes of open discussion (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of one minute of quiet time (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card)

5. **Judge Duties**

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Review the discussion topics.
- c) Review the Judges Sheet. (see page 11)
- d) Attend the Judge Orientation session.
- e) Go to your assigned room 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
 - Final Four judges are not permitted to attend any preceding rounds.
- f) Meet with the room chair and moderator to receive a list of competitors in your room.
- g) Remain seated until your room chair calls for you to leave the room to do the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- h) Select winners. (see **Scoring**)
- i) Judges should:
 - List competitors on your Judges Sheet from left-to-right for ease in identification.
 - Score competitors using the Judges Sheet.
 - Total the scores.
 - There is a total of 700 possible points.
 - Determine and record competitor ranking and ensure there are no ties in raw score or rank.
 - Sign your Judges Sheet.
- j) Judges should not:
 - Sit near a fellow judge.
 - Judge by applause.
 - Confer with each other until all scores are tabulated.

Scoring

The room chair will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use the point system indicated on the Judges Sheet to assist in selecting the winners. Each judge will be instructed to total his/her Judges Sheet and rank the competitors. Each judge is to break ties that occur on his/her own score sheet. The room chair will assist the judges in determining the final ranking of each round and the final competition.

- The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed.
 - Ties will be broken at the end of each round by an automatic procedure using Problem Solving and Implementation as the first tiebreaker, followed by Analysis of Topic and Cooperative Attitude. (see **Appendix A**)
 - In the event of an unresolvable tie between all three categories, total points from the judges' Judges Sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chair will assist with this process.
- When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room, with only the judges, room chair and Discussion Meet chair present.

Opening Rounds

The contestants will compete in round one as they have in the past. Prior to the competition, competitors will be placed in rooms using the Microsoft Access software that has been used in the past. After round one, competitors' scores will be tallied, and they will be given new room assignments according to their rank. For round two, each room will have a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th ranked competitor (this number will vary based on available rooms and participation numbers). Contestants will compete in the second round, and their scores will be tallied again. (see **Appendix C**)

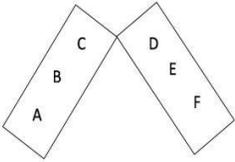
Sweet Sixteen

The top 16 competitors will compete in the Sweet 16 round, same as in the past, and will be placed into room assignments in the same manner as round two. The winning contestant in each of the four Sweet 16 rooms will advance to the Final Four where a fourth and final topic will be discussed. (see **Appendix C**)

Discussion Meet Judges Sheet

Discussion Meet Judges Sheet

Room Name: _____

<p>In these columns, put the first and last name of the competitors according to where they are sitting using this diagram:</p> 	Comp A Name:	Comp B Name:	Comp C Name:	Comp D Name:	Comp E Name:	Comp F Name:
<p>(1) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points) Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding, and the inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.</p>						
<p>(2) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (150 points) Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.</p>						
<p>(3) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (100 points) Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants.</p>						
<p>(4) DELIVERY: (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.</p>						
<p>(5) OPENING STATEMENT: (50 points) Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.</p>						
<p>(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points) Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.</p>						
<p>Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. TOTAL → Total of 700 points possible.</p>						
<p>Rank contestants: 1(highest) – 6(lowest) RANK →</p>						

**AFBF Discussion Meet
Official Tally Sheet**
Round 1 () Round 2 ()

Competitors Final Ranking

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	1	2	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	2	3	2	7	
Goldy Gopher	3	1	3	7	
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**You have a 1st and 4th place, but a tie for 2nd so move to the first tie breaker*

Competitors**Tie Breaker #1 – Problem Solving and Implementation**

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	1	2	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	2	3	2	7	
Goldy Gopher	3	1	3	7	
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**You still have a tie. Move to 2nd tie breaker*

Competitors**Tie Breaker #2 – Analysis of Topic**

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	1	2	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	3	1	3	7	
Goldy Gopher	2	3	2	7	
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**You still have a tie. Move to 3rd tie breaker*

Competitors**Tie Breaker #3 – Cooperative Attitude**

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Brutus Buckeye	2	1	1	4	1
Herbie Husker	1	2	3	6	2
Goldy Gopher	3	3	2	8	3
Nittany Nellie	4	4	4	12	4

**There is finally a final rank. You now have a 2nd and 3rd place. Remember the rankings that are clear in the first box do not ever change, even if they were to fall from that rank in one of the tie breaker boxes.*

Tie Breaker**Appendix B**

**AFBF Discussion Meet
Official Tally Sheet**
Round 1 () Round 2 ()

Competitors Final Ranking

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Clark Kent	2	3	2	7	2
Peter Parker	3	2	4	9	3
Bruce Wayne	1	1	1	3	1
Tony Stark	4	4	3	11	4

**Technically, you do not need to go any further since you have a rank, but please fill out the entire form.*

Competitors**Tie Breaker #1 – Problem Solving and Implementation**

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Clark Kent	2	1	2	5	2
Peter Parker	4	3	3	10	3
Bruce Wayne	1	2	1	4	1
Tony Stark	3	4	4	11	4

Competitors**Tie Breaker #2 – Analysis of Topic**

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Clark Kent	1	4	3	8	3
Peter Parker	4	3	4	11	4
Bruce Wayne	3	1	1	5	1
Tony Stark	2	2	2	6	2

**Even though the rank is different from the official rank, it does not change the official rank.*

Competitors**Tie Breaker #3 – Cooperative Attitude**

(In Seating Order)	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Final Rank
Clark Kent	1	2	2	5	2
Peter Parker	3	4	3	10	3
Bruce Wayne	2	1	1	4	1
Tony Stark	4	3	4	11	4

Discussion Meet Ranking System

Background:

AFBF has a long history of hosting competitions that challenge young farmers and ranchers to promote agriculture and become strong business leaders. The AFBF YF&R Committee is always looking for ways to further that legacy and has discussed at length ways to make the competitions even better for members.

In the past, the first two rounds of the Discussion Meet were in a “round robin” format that leaves the competitor placement in subsequent rounds completely random. The AFBF YF&R Committee believes using a ranking system (much like a college sports tournament) will create a better competitive experience and allow the “true” top competitors to make it to the Final Four. Based on feedback from competitors, judges, coordinators, and spectators the round robin system sometimes has three or four strong contestants in the same room, all competing against each other early in the competition. Additional feedback also indicated the opposite can be true, too. After thorough review, the committee firmly believes that using a ranking system for round two will allow for better discussions from participants and allow the best of the best to advance to the Sweet 16 and Final Four rounds.

The contestants will compete in round one as they have in the past. Prior to the competition, competitors will be placed in rooms using the Microsoft Access software that has been used in the past. After round one, competitors scores will be tallied, and they will be given new room assignments according to their rank. For round two, each room will have a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th ranked competitor (this number will vary based on available rooms and participation numbers). They will compete in the second round, and their scores will again be tallied. The top 16 competitors will compete in the Sweet 16 round, same as in the past, and will be placed into room assignments in the same manner as round two. The winning contestant in each of the four Sweet 16 rooms will advance to the Final Four. This system was tested and used during the 2016 Collegiate Discussion Meet competition in Kansas City, MO and was incredibly well received and allowed for a high quality discussion.

To help facilitate this change, and make the time between rounds quick and efficient, a tool has been developed to assist with the process. It computes scores quickly, and sorts contestants into the appropriate room for the next round. The AFBF YF&R Committee has been diligent in their desire to enhance the experience for competitors and believes you will find the change to be efficient and fair.

Please note that a state is not required to use the ranking system. We encourage each state to select their state winner in the fashion that they see best for them. AFBF is simply providing this information and the Excel file as one possible way of scoring the Discussion Meet.

Instructions for Using the New Ranking System:

1. If using an older version of Excel, before opening the Excel file, you must first open Excel and enable the program to run the macros. You do this by:
 - Click on Excel Options (usually found under the file tab – or office button). From here you will click on: Trust Center, Trust Center Settings, Macro Settings, and then select enable all macros, click ok.If using Excel 2010, simply open the Discussion Meet Excel file.
2. Now open the Discussion Meet Excel file, and save it under a new name and location (i.e. 2017 DM Round 1); this will ensure you always have a clean master version.
3. You will now need to know which “tab” to enter your Discussion Meet participants into. You will decide this by how many participants, including available rooms, and judges. For example, if you have 24 contestants, you could run a “four room contest” with six participants in each room, or a “six room contest” with only four contestants in each room. You will want to take into consideration the availability of judges, room chairs and moderators, etc.
4. Once you have decided how many rooms/contestants you will have, you may begin entering names into the spreadsheet on the appropriate tab. Once the names are entered you may give contestants their room assignments for round one ONLY! At the AFBF level, an Access program is used to randomize placement in the opening round. If only four contestants are in one room, leave the other two spots empty. Contestants will not receive their second round room assignment until after the completion of round one.
5. Begin round one. Upon completion judges report to the tabulation room, and report the RANK (1-6, one being the highest) for each contestant they judged. Keep their judging sheet in case it is needed later to break a tie manually.
6. After all scores for each contestant are entered run the appropriate macro – as listed in the top right hand corner of the sheet you are working on. Running the macro will score contestants and arrange them accordingly into their room assignments for the next round.
7. Give contestants room assignments and repeat step 6.
8. Once you get your final scores, you will need to make sure there are no ties that need to be broken manually. Please refer to Appendix A and B for guidance on breaking a tie.

Frequently Asked Questions:

For which competition(s) will this ranking system be used?

The ranking system will be used for the 2017 Discussion Meet in Phoenix, Arizona. After the competition, the AFBF YF&R Committee and staff will evaluate the competition and system to determine if it will be used in future years.

How will a competitor know what room they are competing in round two?

An announcement will be made after round one with rooming assignments for round two; this will look similar to the announcement for the Sweet 16 and Final Four. Judging assignments will also be released at the same time to ensure that no judge is in a room with a contestant from their home state.

Is it possible that two competitors could compete in the same room twice?

In a national competition with multiple rooms, it is extremely unlikely that competitors would compete against each other in round one and two. It is more likely in a smaller competition with fewer rooms. As in the past, it is possible that competitors could compete in an opening round together and meet again in the Sweet 16 or Final Four.

What are macros?

Macros are little programs that run within **Excel** and help automate common repetitive tasks. **Macros** are one of **Excel's** most powerful, yet underutilized features. Using **macros**, you can save hours and boost productivity manifold. In the system, the macros simply take the competitors rank and place them in the respective rooms. The placement in rooms could be done by hand, but the Excel file coupled with the macros saves a significant amount of time.

My macros aren't working, or have a strange name, why?

If you are using a version of Excel prior to 2010 and if your macros aren't working or look strange it's probably because you opened the Excel file before you enabled the macros to run in your program. Your program will automatically assume the macros are bad unless you enable them before opening the spreadsheet. If you are using Excel 2010 the macros are automatically enabled.

Where do I go to run the macros?

Macros are under the "view" tab. You will click on the macro drop down menu and select view macros. You will select the appropriate macro from there and click "run".

If I don't fill all six (6) available spots in my rooms do I need to put in "fake names" for the score to work out right? Why do they already have a score of 75?

You do not need to fill all six contestant spots. You can have as few as three and the spreadsheet will still work correctly. You do not need to enter "fake names" as the 0 serves that purpose. The 0 that will appear when no name is entered is equivalent to "N/A" or a fake name. The score of 75 will remain with the blank contestant places and therefore cast the black spot out of the running with the score of 75.

How do I ensure success in case something goes wrong?

The best way to make sure everything goes smoothly is to plan ahead. Make sure you never alter the actual DM ranking master copy. Open it, but immediately save it as something else. After each round, but before running a macro, save the spreadsheet as something new. That way, if something goes wrong, you are simply going back a few steps and not completely over.

Has the system been used before or tested?

After discussing ways to verify the quality of the ranking system, our IT director recommended completing manual integrity tests. An integrity test consists of completing what the system is supposed to do by hand and then running the system behind it to see if the results match. If so, the system is running true to its purpose. AFBF staff did four integrity tests and found all of the following to be true:

1. The system accurately tallies each individual's rank correctly.
2. The rankings between Round 1 and Round 2 are accurately tallied for the Sweet 16 selection.
3. The competitors are placed into subsequent rounds according to their ranking scores for the "most fair" competitor matches.
4. The competitors with the highest rankings (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) advance to the Sweet 16 and Final Four rounds.

This system has been used in several states for their official contests, and has proven itself to run well in real-time. It was also used for the 2016 Collegiate Discussion Meet national competition in Kansas City successfully.