

Female Representation Across Region

Our previous articles have focused mainly on variations across region. In this article, we will discuss the proportion of female and male judges and competitors at the TOC between 2004 and 2009. This is an important subject because many members of the debate community are concerned by the lack of female representation in debate, especially at the most elite levels of competition. While this might be a touchy subject, we feel that it is important to discuss.

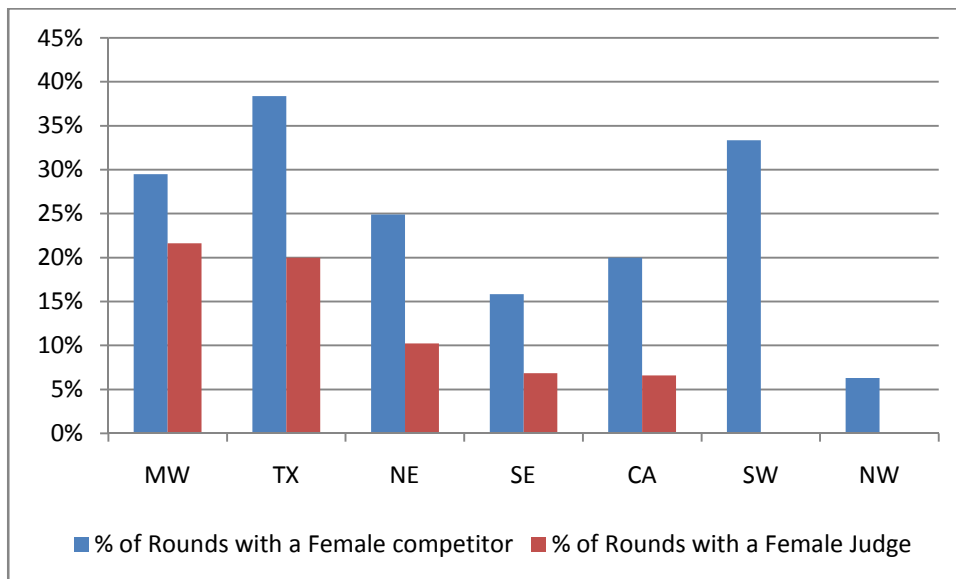


Figure 1 Percentage of Rounds with a Female Competitor and Percentage of Rounds with a Female Judge.

Overall, females judged 13% of rounds and competed in 26% of rounds. Figure 1 shows the percentage of rounds competed in and judged by females from each region. The total number of rounds competed/judged by females from a region is divided by the total number of rounds judged or competed in by females from the region. A round with two female debaters is counted as two rounds. The Midwest provided the highest percentage of rounds judged by a female while Texas provided the highest percentage of rounds debated by a female. Most notably, the Northwest and Southwest provided no female judges to the TOC over the past six years. Only one female from the Northwest competed at the TOC in the past six years, and only one female from the Northeast judged at the TOC during the same period. Oddly, the Southwest provided the second highest percentage of rounds competed in by a female, while providing no female judges.

We invite you to comment on what may contribute to variation in gender participation across region as well as the implications of such variation. Are females more welcomed or better trained in certain regions and not others? What could regions that are lacking in female participation do to increase participation in both competition and judging at the most elite levels of competition?