

The Politics of Debates -- No Props, Charts or Risers

(CNN) -- Sep. 21, 2004 -- Here are highlights of some of the rules laid out in the 32-page agreement on the three presidential debates ahead of the November election.

- * No television camera shots from behind the candidates and no cutaway shots of candidates who are not answering questions.
- * Other than a handshake at the start of the debates, the candidates are not to approach each other.
- * No props, notes, charts, diagrams or other writings can be used by the candidates; however, they can take notes on the type of paper of their choosing.
- * The candidates cannot ask each other direct questions, but can ask rhetorical questions.
- * The candidates cannot address each other with proposed pledges.
- * Each candidate can use his own makeup artist.
- * No candidate is allowed to use risers or any other device to make them look taller.
- * The Coin Toss: At least 72 hours before the first debate, there will be a coin toss on the order of questioning and closing arguments. The winner gets to choose whether to take the first or second question, or whether to give the first or second closing statement. The coin-toss loser then chooses his preference of question order or closing statement order not exercised by the winner of the coin toss. For the next debate, the coin-toss loser gets to pick first. There will be a separate coin toss for the final debate.
- * Another coin toss will determine stage positions of the candidates.
- * There will be at least 16 questions. A candidate gets two minutes to respond to a question; the other candidate gets 1 1/2 minutes to comment on the question or to respond to his rival's answer. A moderator can use his/her discretion on whether to extend the discussion by 60 seconds.
- * For the second debate, which has a town-hall forum, the audience members submit questions to the moderator, who then approves which audience members get to participate. If audience members stray from their questions, the moderator is to cut them off.
- * Other than Secret Service personnel and the president's doctor and military aide, each candidate is allowed to have only one pre-designated staff member in the wings or the immediate backstage area.

<http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/09/21/debate.highlights/index.html>