PO (Presiding Officer) Basics

As a PO in the WODL (Wayne/Oakland Debate League) you have 1 main job and 4 primary responsibilities pertaining to that job:

1. #1 job- Preside over (lead) the chamber using Robert’s Rules of Order
2. Robert’s Rules have been used to maintain fairness, decorum and order during many different kinds of meetings for over a century
3. School Boards, City Councils and our state and federal legislatures use RRO
4. 4 responsibilities while presiding over the chamber
5. Fairly enforce all WODL rules (3 cycles per bill, suspending rules requires 2/3 majority, know and follow recency rules (see below), etc.)
6. Maintain flow of debate. Confident PO’s keep thing running quickly without feeling rushed. The quicker you are as a PO, the more time there is for speaking.
7. Resolve conflicts quickly, fairly and confidently- YOU are in charge!
8. Communicate speech times to judges after each speech
9. Recency- this is the method that you as a PO use to determine who should have the floor to speak. As a PO you should be familiar and confident with applying recency rules. They are consistent and should be used in every single session. There are 4 main levels to determine who gets to speak:
10. All else equal, the student with the fewest # of speeches gets the floor, if that is equal…
11. The student with the greatest # of attempts gets the floor, if that is equal…
12. The student with the greatest # of cross ex questions gets the floor, if that is equal…
13. The PO uses “geography” to determine who gets the floor. Generally you begin the session by starting in one corner and traveling in a wave to the opposite corner (often PO’s will say, I will start from my right to my left, from the front to the back)
14. To ensure even handed application, PO’s MUST keep accurate records of speeches (S’s on the seating chart), Attempts (A’s on the seating chart) and Questions (Q’s on the seating chart) for every participant.

https://docs.google.com/a/novischools.net/forms/d/1O26ZfUCMM2oBFhf2gJO4DOkU-sfoPSWgV0Jc87namv4/edit

1. Suggestion: at the beginning of each chamber introduce yourself and run through the names of speakers on your seating chart. Do your best with pronunciations, but at least make an effort☺ After that, begin the session with a reminder of recency rules, then open debate and get started!