

Mock Trial Training - Advanced

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South Carolina
BAR FOUNDATION
Lawyers Sustaining Justice

Funding of this program is through the SC Bar Foundation's IOLTA grant.



Mock Trial New Teacher Coaches Basics

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**Attorney Coaches:
How do I get a volunteer Attorney?**

- School's Volunteer List
- School's PTA
- Students' Parents
- School's Alumni Listing
- Local Bar
- All else fails --- contact SC Bar LRE Division



There is no cost with getting a volunteer attorney.

**Attorney Coaches:
What types of attorneys make
good attorney coaches?**

- Typically, any attorney willing to coach a team makes a good attorney coach.
- Attorneys that are trial attorneys seem to be more willing to be attorney coaches than attorneys that do closings.



**Attorney Coaches:
Quick Facts**

- An attorney coach is not required to attend the competitions with the team.
- A team can have more than one attorney coach.
- A team can compete without the assistance of an attorney coach, but is not recommended.

**Attorney Coaches:
Are there any incentives for an attorney to volunteer?**

- Attorneys can receive pro-bono hours for every hour that they volunteer with the school.
- Receive recognition by their peers in the SC Bar News and E-Blast.
- Flexibility to work around his/her schedule.
 - Some will want to meet before school, *during* lunch or in the evenings.
- Candidate for LRE Lawyer of the Year.



**Attorney Coaches:
What does the attorney coach do?**

- Helps interview the students;
- Teaches students rules of evidence;
- Helps students pull the important information out of the case; and
- Helps students with how to deliver an opening statement, a direct examination, cross examination, closing argument, entering evidence and how to object.



**Teacher Coaches:
What do the teacher coaches do?**

- Completes all registration information and necessary paperwork for the SC Bar and the school;
- Promotes Mock Trial in the school;
- Interviews students for the roles;
- Recruits other teachers to help; and
 - Kinds of teachers include: drama, English, bus drivers, etc.
- Works with students on the days the attorney does not work with them to ensure that the students have prepared for the next session.



Teacher Coaches:

Are there any incentives for a teacher to coordinate a team?

- Some schools offer extra pay to coordinate a Mock Trial team with discretionary funding.
- SC Bar provides teachers with certificates indicating the number of hours spent with mock trial to be used toward continuing education units.
- Can personally be a candidate for LRE Teacher of the Year with a \$500 award.
- Can have school be a candidate for LRE School of the Year with a \$2,500 award.



How do I promote Mock Trial at my school?

- Place posters in the school (provided by SC Bar);
- Announce in morning and afternoon announcements;
- Have teachers help nominate students for tryouts;
- Seek specific students out yourself; and
- Host an informational session showing a little of the Mock Trial DVD.
- Show the quick promotional Mock Trial video on the school's morning news show.
- Promote \$500 High School Mock Trial Scholarships available for seniors to apply.

When do I promote Mock Trial?

Early, Early, Early

When do I register the team?

- Registration forms are sent out in the beginning of the school year.
 - Forms need a principal's signature
 - You do not need a team put together when registering the team, just the desire to put the team together.
 - Can send payment after the team is registered.



How much does it cost to register a Mock Trial team?

- It costs \$100 to register a team for the regional competitions.
 - High School can register up to two teams.
- All teams advancing to the state competition pay an additional \$150 registration fee.

What other costs are associated with Mock Trial?

- Copying case materials
- Possible snacks for practices
- Transportation to regional competitions
 - Columbia, Conway, Charleston, Greenville, Lexington
- Lodging for state competition (Columbia)

What is involved in auditions?

- Have a copy of the old case materials
- Have all students learn the same affidavit
- Test the students on the case materials, competition rules, and rules of evidence.

***** Always include your volunteer attorneys in tryouts.**

Why conduct auditions?

- Allows for teachers and attorney coaches to **see interest** in program.
- Allows opportunity to see what role the students are **best suited for**.
- It allows students to put their own **spin on a character** and gives the teachers and attorney coaches more ideas for character development/roles.
- Allows teachers and attorney coaches to **see potential** as far as determination, flexibility, memorization skills, ability to think quick on their feet, etc.

How many students should be recruited to be on the team?

- Always, start out with more than the minimum of six students.
- Most schools prefer to have a base of six students for each side (Plaintiff/Prosecution and Defense) = 12 students.
- Most schools prefer to have several alternates and/or two teams, if a high school.
- See team breakdown on next slide.

Team Composition

- **Middle School: 1 Team – 6 to 16 competing students**
(attorneys/witnesses, timekeeper and bailiff, not including alternates) from the same school may enter the competition.
- **High School: up to 2 Teams – 6 to 18 competing students each**
(attorneys/witnesses, timekeeper and Bailiff, not including alternates) from the same school may enter the competition.

<div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; border: 1px solid black; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Prosecution / Plaintiff</div>	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; border: 1px solid black; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Defense</div>
Attorneys: 2 – 4 (MS) / 2 – 3 (HS) Witnesses: 3 Bailiff: 1	Attorneys: 2 – 4 (MS) / 2 – 3 (HS) Witnesses: 3
1 Timekeeper (<i>can also be bailiff</i>) 2 Courtroom Sketch Artists (<i>HS only</i>) 2 Courtroom Journalists (<i>HS only</i>) Unlimited Alternates (<i>non-competing roles</i>)	

What types of students are teachers trying to recruit?

- All kinds – no “ideal” type of student
- The Mock Trial program is for all students. The sky is the limit.



Recruit students from all the same grade or across all the grades?

- Some teams prefer all one grade, i.e. 8th grade.
 - **Advantage:** More mature than 6th and 7th graders.
 - **Disadvantage:** New group of students every year as they graduate out.
- The majority of teams have a mix of grades
(6-8 or 9-12 depending on if a Middle or High School Team).
 - **Advantage:** More diversified group, more experienced students help teach new students, and students get more experienced with each new year.
 - **Disadvantage:** More diversified group.

How often should a team meet to practice?

- Depends on the agenda for the teacher(s), attorney(s) and students.
- Some teams practice once a week, twice a week, etc.
- Teams tend to have more practices closer to the competition date; especially two weeks out from the competition date(s).

When does a team practice?

- Schedule practices around the teacher's and the attorney's schedules.
- Some teams like to meet in the morning, during homeroom, during lunch, after school, etc.
- Some have Mock Trial as an elective class, while the majority have Mock Trial as an after school activity.

Why would a team drop out and when?

- A team would most likely drop out when there are not enough team members.
- Drop out would occur by the stated drop out date each year by submitting a withdrawal form signed by the lead teacher coach and the school principal.
- If a team drops out past the drop deadline, the team automatically forfeits eligibility to compete the following competition year.
- Registration fees are non-refundable.

What does a regional competition day involve?

- Registration
- Round One
- Round Two
- A lunch or snack break (on your own)
- Round Three (if High School)
- Awards recognition and proposed teams to advance to the state competition



How are the teams picked for advancing to the state competition?

- The “**proposed**” top teams from each region advance to the state competition.
 - The proposed teams are confirmed and verified. Final verification of teams are announced the Tuesday following the competition by 5pm.
 - The number is based on a percentage of the teams participating in each regional competition.
 - The number of teams advancing to the state competition is announced at the closing ceremony at each regional competition.

I am brand new to Mock Trial, where do I start?

- Checklist:
 - Speak to your principal and **get approval** to sponsor a team at your school.
 - If desired, **speak to fellow teachers** to see if there are any interested in helping you with the Mock Trial team.
 - Start seeking and **secure an attorney coach**.
 - Complete **registration paperwork** sent out in August and submit to SC Bar.
 - Seek a **mentor** Mock Trial teacher. (If desired, contact SC Bar.)
 - Determine how the students will be **recruited and auditioned**.
 - Get Mock Trial **posters** from SC Bar.
 - **Promote** Mock Trial at your school.
 - **Audition** students at your school.
 - Set practice **schedule**.
 - Start **practicing**.

**We have started practicing,
now what?**

- Checklist Suggestions:
 - Seek setting up a **scrimmage** with another Mock Trial team.
 - Set up an **exhibition scrimmage** for a school assembly.
 - Set up an **“in house” scrimmage** and invite some local attorneys to serve as **judges for some feedback**.
 - Closer to the competition, some schools will **practice in local courtrooms** to get students comfortable with their surroundings.
 - Conduct a **parents’ meeting** to prepare them for competition day and what you need from them.
 - **Stay in contact with the SC Bar** during your Mock Trial season if you have any questions or concerns.
 - **Visit the Mock Trial forum throughout** preparation to post questions and to see answers posted to other questions. (Closes 72 hours prior to a competition.)

Questions?

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