



# What to Expect at the State Mock Trial Competition

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**Teams / Visitor Badges:** Each team is allotted 24 visitor badges. (Teacher and attorney coaches have separate team badges.) If there are more than 16 students on a team, the remaining students need to wear visitor badges. Be aware the courtrooms have limited seating and vary in size with each courtroom assignment. Like the regional competitions, a team's visitors cannot view a round without visitor badges that match their team's code.

**Pairing/Room Assignments and Power Matching:** The state competition has three rounds for all teams. All teams are seeded, and power matched in the first round using teams' final standing earned at regional competitions. Power matching is completed after each round and cannot take place until all teams have completed their round. When determining pairings for the second round, it is possible that a team may perform the same side consecutively. It is guaranteed that both sides of each team will compete once each during the competition. Detailed information about power matching can be found in the rules. Lead teachers will receive a text no later than 8 pm Friday night with side performance and courtroom number for Saturday morning. Teams need to be seated in their assigned courtroom 15 minutes prior to each round beginning.

**Communication:** Any communication that takes place over the bar subjects the team to a strong point deduction. Visitors, coaches, and non-competing team members are to refrain from all communication with competing team members unless directed by the presiding judge. Any communication during the competition or post-competition not from the lead teacher and/or attorney coaches is considered to be in non-compliance of Rule 1.9 (Communication with Mock Trial Coordinators). Everyone should have cell phones on silent throughout the competition day.

**Photography/Videography:** Video cameras and photography are permitted in this courthouse. Use of these devices for photos or video recording must be approved by both teams in each round. Permission in one round does not grant permission in remaining rounds. All photos and videos must be taken from a seated position without blocking or distracting others.

**Late Arrivals:** Must obtain a nametag from the LRE Staff prior to entering a courtroom.

**Transitioning In and Out of Courtrooms:** Visitors are asked to be respectful of both teams competing and only enter or exit the courtroom during a transition. A transition is when a witness is leaving the witness stand.

**Judging/Scoring:** Each trial has a presiding judge overseeing the trial and a minimum of two people serving as the jury. Should there only be two judges serving as jury members or an emergency with the third scoring judge, a ghost ballot is created with scores averaged for a third scoresheet and the presiding judge determines which team wins the third ballot. The scoring judges score each team on how well they perform, their knowledge and understanding of the case itself and the trial process, not guilt or innocence. The scoring judges also determine the most effective witness and most effective attorney for each round in addition to the most effectives determined by each team's opponent after each round. The championship rounds have a larger scoring panel.

**Recesses:** During the competition there is a recess. Anyone behind the bar (visitor seating) may not leave or communicate during the recess. Only students in front of the bar may communicate, for the purposes of adjusting their closing arguments.

**Snack Breaks:** Friday's break between the first and second rounds allows teams to have snacks and beverages outside of the courthouse, or in the Community Room. No snacks or beverages are provided. Food and beverages (including water) may not be brought into the courthouse. There will be an additional snack break between the two championship rounds on Saturday. Please dispose of all garbage in trash cans.

**Closing Assembly / Championship Round / Selection of Sides:** The Closing Assembly starts with the presentation of the regional advancement plaques. Next, the most effective witnesses and attorneys are recognized from each round. A Professionalism and Civility Award is also announced for the State Competition. At the conclusion, the top two teams competing in the championship rounds are announced. Each of the top two teams' designated team members and lead teacher coaches come forward for the official coin toss to determine which sides performed in the first championship round.

**Saturday's Lunch:** After the top teams are announced and the remaining teams are dismissed, lunch will be provided to the top two teams and their guests. Both teams and their guests will eat in the designated room. Students have priority to eat first, then guests. After lunch, guests do not need to reapply visitor badges.

**Announcing of State Winner:** The winner of the State Mock Trial Competition is announced approximately 15 to 20 minutes following the second championship round, with the presentation of the state gavels and medallions. The State High School Mock Trial Champion will represent South Carolina at the 2025 National High School Mock Trial Competition May 7-9 in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Presentation of Westbrook Traveling Championship Cup:** The presentation of Westbrook Traveling Championship Cup and medallions will be presented to the team after engraving is complete, along with state championship certificates. The State Championship Team and their respective school are responsible for the upkeep/security of the cup, while it is on display at the school. The traveling cup is returned by the following year's state Mock Trial competition.