



What to Expect at State Mock Trial Competitions

2020/21 State Competition Dates:

Middle School: Friday and Saturday, December 11 and 12, 2020 – Columbia

High School: Friday and Saturday, March 12 and 13, 2021 – Columbia

Teams / Visitor Badges: Note that there are only 24 visitor badges allotted per team. (Teacher and attorney coaches have separate team badges.) Also note that if there are more than 16 students on a middle school team and 14 students on a high school team, the remaining students need to wear visitor badges. There are only 24 visitor badges total available to each team. Teams should not feel like they have to use all 24 visitor badges as 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. After the third round, the top two teams are announced. The top teams will compete in two championship rounds alternating sides. All teams are seeded and powermatched in the first round by using teams' final standing earned at the regional competitions. Powermatching is a form of pairing teams that mirrors National High School Mock Trial, which cannot take place until all teams have completed a round. All subsequent rounds are powermatched based on the results of each round performed. When determining pairings for the subsequent rounds, it is possible that a team may perform a particular side more than once consecutively. It is guaranteed; however, that both sides of each team will have performed by the third round. Detailed information about rankings and powermatching can be found in the case materials. Lead teachers are texted on their cell phone no later than 10pm Friday night indicating the side of their third round performance for Saturday morning and their time for arrival and re-registration. Teams need to be seated in their assigned courtroom 15 minutes prior to each round beginning for in-person competitions and 30 minutes prior for virtual competitions. To reduce congestion, teams are asked to send a representative to check the boards and not have entire teams in the hallways checking boards.

Communication: Any communication that takes place over the bar subjects the team to a strong point deduction or even disqualification. Visitors, coaches, and non-competing team members are to refrain from all communication with competing team members unless directed by the presiding judge. Communication is directed solely to the State Coordinator and is made only by the lead teacher and/or attorney coaches. 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 3.9 (Communication with Mock Trial Coordinators) and is subject to Rule 6.4 (Discipline for Non-Trial Violations). Everyone is encouraged to have cell phones off at all times while in the courtroom. Please be prepared for a very poor cell phone signal in this facility. If someone needs to reach you, it would be better via text rather than a cell phone call. Coaches are strongly discouraged from discussing rounds with other coaches during the state competition weekend.

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

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 getting on or off the witness stand.

Judging/Scoring: Each trial has a presiding judge overseeing the trial and a minimum of two and a maximum of three people serving as the jury. Should there only be two judges serving as jury members or an emergency with the third scoring judge, the scores are 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 should have a larger scoring jury.

Recess: During the competition, the competing sides are given up to a five minute recess prior to their closing arguments. This is an opportunity for students in front of the bar to make adjustments to their closing argument. Students in front of the bar do not leave the courtroom nor have communication with anyone behind the bar. Only individuals

behind the bar may leave the courtroom during the five minute recess. It cannot be stressed enough that there should be no communication across the bar at any time including the recess unless directed by the presiding judge.

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

Closing Assembly / Championship Round / Selection of Sides for Championship Round:

The Closing Assembly starts with the presentation of the regional advancement plaques. The most effective witnesses and attorneys are recognized from each round. At the conclusion, the top two teams competing in the two championship rounds are announced. Each of the top two teams' designated team members and lead teacher coaches come to the front of the award area for the official coin toss to determine sides performed prior to their first championship round. Once the coin toss is completed, the top two teams immediately leave the Closing Assembly and proceed to designated room for lunch. Guests associated with both teams join the two teams once the Closing Assembly is over. Guests associated with both teams do not need to re-apply visitor badges.

Saturday's Lunch: After the top teams are announced and the remaining ten teams are dismissed, a catered lunch from Chick-Fil-A will be provided to the top two teams and their guests. Both teams and their guests must eat in the designated room and not in the hallways. Guests of both teams are asked to allow team members to eat their lunch and meet with their coaches without interruption during this allotted time for lunch.

Announcing of State Winner: The proposed winner of the State Mock Trial Competition is announced approximately 15 to 20 minutes following the championship round. Scoresheets are reconfirmed following the competition day and the official team is announced the following Tuesday by 5pm on the SC Bar Web site. Until certified by the SC Bar, the State Mock Trial Champion is not finalized. The SC Bar reserves the right to correct any errors or omissions; therefore, any announcement of a team as the state champion and advancing to the next level of competition is subject to correction. Upon confirmation, the State High School Mock Trial Champion represents South Carolina at the 2021 National High School Mock Trial competition May 13 - 16, Evansville, Indiana. There is no national competition for middle school.

Presentation of Traveling Championship Cup: The presentation of Traveling Championship Cup will be presented to the team along with state championship certificates at the school's awards ceremony at the school's awards assembly. 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 at the following year's Regional Mock Trial competition.