



# What to Expect at Regional Mock Trial Competitions

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## **The Basics: What is Mock Trial?**

A Mock Trial is a pretend trial and involves either civil or criminal cases, just like a real court. In Mock Trial the students present the case and act as the main characters in the courtroom. By incorporating Mock Trial, students learn about the basis of our American judicial system and the mechanics of litigation. In addition, students are encouraged to learn and understand the meaning of good citizenship in a democracy. Graduating High School Mock Trial students with at least two years' experience are eligible for High School Mock Trial scholarships when continuing with higher education.

## **Nametags:**

No one can view any round without matching visitor badges. All team members and visitors are identified according to their respective team badges. Students have white pin-on name badges with two coded letters representing their team to keep the school anonymous. The students' respective visitors are assigned the same two coded letters on their badges. Note that if there are more than 16 students on a team, the remaining students wear visitor badges. There are only 24 visitor badges available to a team. All visitor and team badges are to be returned at the end of the competition day.

## **Late Arrivals:**

Obtain a nametag from security 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 getting on or off the witness stand. Reentering the courtroom is to be done when the witness is leaving the witness stand.

## **Judging/Scoring:**

Each trial has a presiding judge overseeing the trial and a minimum of two, but normally three scoring judges serving as the jury. The scoring judges score each student's performance, 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. Scoresheets are sent electronically following all regional competitions and after all scoresheets have been verified.

## **Introductions:**

Once teams are in their respective courtrooms, students are asked to address the presiding judge and scoring judges providing only their names and roles in the competition, not their school name.

## **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 with the State and/or Regional Mock Trial Coordinators is made solely by the lead teacher/attorney coach. Any communication not from the lead teacher/attorney coach to the Regional and/or State Coordinator is in non-compliance of Rule 1.9 (Communication with Mock Trial Coordinators) and is subject to Discipline for Non-Trial Violations. All post-competition communication is solely by the lead teacher coach and/or attorney coach directed to the State Coordinator. There is no reaching out to judges or Regional Coordinators post competition. Any post-competition communication not directed to the State Coordinator subjects the team to penalties up to disqualification the following school year.

**Recesses:**

During the competition there is a recess before closing arguments. Anyone behind the bar (visitor seating) may not leave or communicate during the recess. The recess is time for the students to adjust their closing arguments. Only students in front of the bar may communicate.

**Photography/Videography:**

Video cameras and non-flash photography may be used during the competition only with the consent of the presiding judge and both teams. Flash pictures may not be taken during the competition. Upon approval, people may take stationary pictures from the seated position. No movement in the courtroom for pictures is permitted.

**Number of Rounds:**

If there is an even number of teams in a region, then there are three rounds with all teams competing in all three rounds. If there is an odd number of teams at a competition, see Rule 10.3 Bye Round. Bye round means that one team is sitting out every round. Bye teams may use this round time to prepare for their next competitive round. A round intended for a team to sit out cannot be attached to a lunch period. This mechanism is in place to ensure all teams have equal treatment. The team designated as the Bye round team for the third round may leave the competition following the round posting.

**Lunch / Snacks:**

There is no eating inside the courthouse permitted unless specified by the court. Teams need to plan for lunch at the first break only. The second break is shorter and intended for snacks only. Teams are to stay on site and coaches/team guests either bring prepared food for lunch or go and pick up lunches for the team. Remember when planning for this lunch, students must be seated in their respective courtrooms 15 minutes prior to each round and should plan on allowing time to re-enter the courthouse security.

**Closing Assembly:**

After competing in the rounds, everyone leaves for the day. The Virtual Closing Assembly on Monday evening following the competition day. During this virtual closing assembly, the most effective attorney and most effective witness from each round nominated by the scoring judges are announced and concludes with the announcement of teams advancing to the state competition. In addition, the Professionalism and Civility Award (determined by team nominations) will be awarded. There are a total of 12 teams that advance to the state competition to include a top team from each regional competition and the remaining slots are filled with advancing teams. The additional advancing teams are the teams with the next highest wins, ballots, points, and point spread out of all the regional competitions.

**State Competition:**

For the top 12 teams advancing to the two day State Competition, there is a registration fee of \$150 for teams competing in the state competition. Lodging the Friday night of the competition may be needed for some teams as the competition takes place over two days. Teams are on their own for meals and lodging. Should a school not be able to afford the expenditures associated with this competition and forfeit their slot, the slot is offered to the next team according to rankings in the entire state. A school cannot forfeit their slot past the drop deadline date provided each year.