



San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition

Mock Trial Attorney Coach
Kickoff & Preview

Presented by:

Judge Jill L. Burkhardt and Judge Lilys McCoy
September 10 & 15, 2026



Who is the San Diego County High School Mock Trial Committee?

Superior Court of California
County of San Diego

San Diego County Bar
Association (SDCBA)

United States District Court
Southern District of California

County of San Diego
Office of the District Attorney

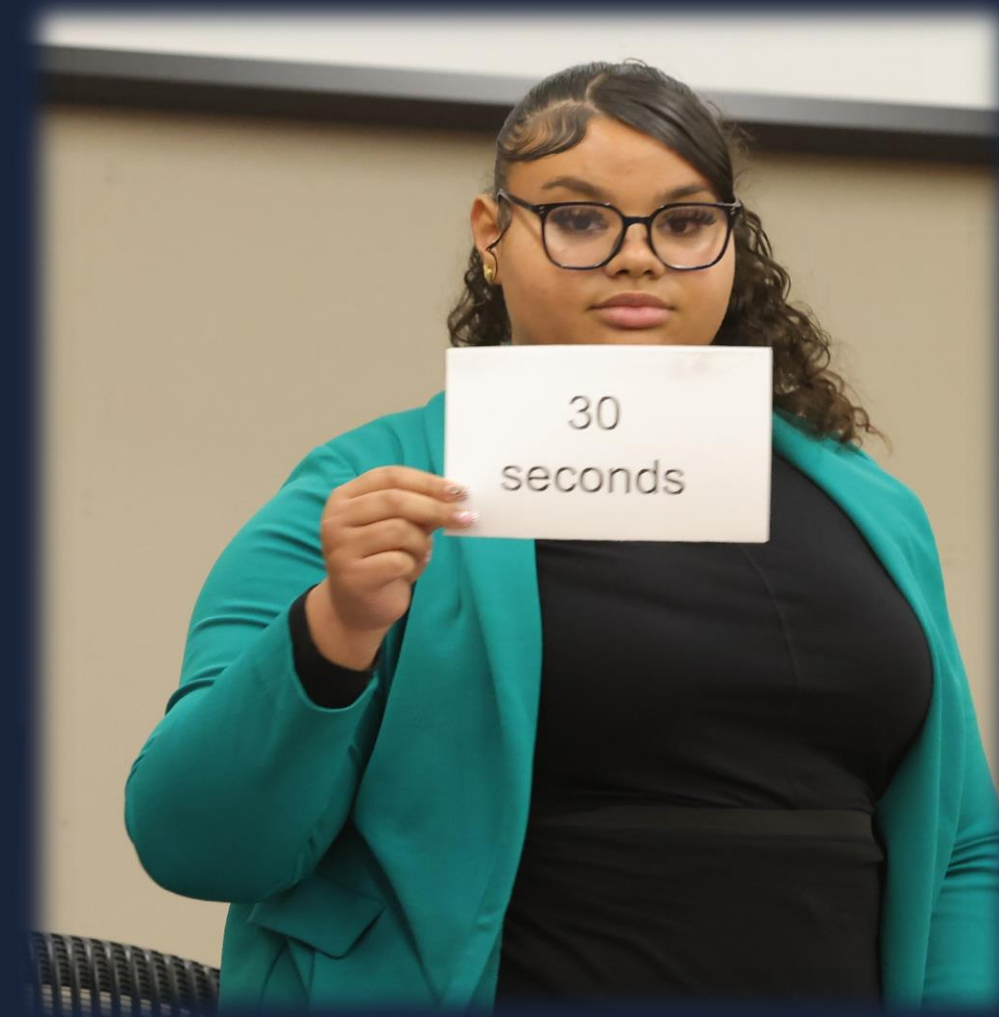
County of San Diego
Office of the Public Defender

Federal Defenders of San
Diego, Inc.

United States Attorney's Office Southern
District of California

San Diego County Office of
Education

San Diego City
Attorney's Office



2025-2026 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Abraham Lincoln High School	Mission Vista High School
Academy of Our Lady of Peace	Morse High School
Bonita Vista High School	Mt. Carmel High School
Bonsall High School	Oceanside High School
Canyon Crest High School	Orange Glen High School
Canyon Hills High School	Otay Ranch High School
Carlsbad High School	Pacific Ridge School
Cathedral Catholic High School	Patrick Henry High School
Coastal Academy High School	Rancho Bernardo High School
Coronado High School	Sage Creek High School
Crawford High School	Saint Augustine High School
Del Norte High School	San Marcos High School
e3 Civic High School	Scripps Ranch High School
Eastlake High School	Southwest High School
Escondido Charter High School	Sweetwater High School
Francis Parker School	The Bishop's School
King-Chavez Community High School	The Cambridge School
La Jolla Country Day School	The Waldorf School of SD
La Jolla High School	Torrey Pines High School
Mission Bay High School	Vista High School
Mission Hills High School	Westview High School

WHAT IS MOCK TRIAL



- Mock Trials are rehearsed trials for the purpose of teaching about the legal system in an academic and competitive manner.
- Mock Trial materials provided by Teach Democracy (TD) (formally known as Constitutional Rights Foundation):
 - 1) a hypothetical criminal case, 2) competition rules (modified for San Diego) and scoring guidelines, and 3) date for statewide competition.
- Students work with experienced attorney coaches.
- We emphasize the **Educational Experience** and **Professional Civility/Good Sportsmanship**.

TRIALS

This year there will be four rounds of competition for all school teams. The top four scoring teams will compete in the semifinal round, and the two teams with the highest scores will advance to the championship round. The winner of the championship round will represent San Diego County at the state finals.

Teams present both sides of the pretrial argument and trial (Prosecution/Defense) two times over the course of four rounds.

State and federal judicial officers will preside over each trial and practicing attorneys will score the competition.



WHO PARTICIPATES?



AttorneyCoaches



High School Students



State and Federal
Judicial Officers



Teacher Advisors



Attorney Scorers

STUDENT ROLES

- 1 pretrial motion attorney (Per our rulebook, pretrial attorneys cannot serve as a trial attorney during the same round, but may serve as a witness, bailiff or unofficial timer)
- 2 or 3 trial attorneys
- 4 witnesses
- 1 clerk – participates with prosecution team
- 1 bailiff – participates with defense team
- 1 (optional) unofficial timer – participates with the defense team

*We strongly recommend you recruit at least 12 – 14 students for each team.

Minimum number of students per round: 8

Maximum number of students per round : 8 for prosecution, 9 for defense (with unofficial timer)

Students can perform both as prosecution and defense.



ATTORNEY COACH

- At least one coach is assigned to work with each team.
- The coach's role is to advise the students on general trial techniques and procedures, as well as specific strategies for presenting the case.



ATTORNEY COACH



- Usually requires meeting with a team at least once per week during the season.
- Note: Please avoid creating conflicts with potential attorney scorers.
- Please don't approach court staff about using the courthouse for practices or scrimmages.

ATTORNEY COACH

- “Attorney Coaches agree to uphold the highest standards of the legal profession and will zealously encourage fair play.”
- “Attorney Coaches are reminded that they must serve as positive role models for the students.”
- “They will promote conduct and decorum among their team members and fellow coaches in accordance with the spirit of the competition’s rules and this Code of Ethical Conduct and will demonstrate the same through their own behavior.”
- “They will emphasize the educational value of the experience by requiring that all courtroom presentations . . . be substantially the work product of the students.”



TEACHER ADVISOR

- Promote Mock Trial and recruit team members.
- Distribute materials and provide instruction.
- Coordinate meetings and responsibilities with attorney coaches.
- Handle logistics such as registering team, paying fee, submitting required paperwork including team rosters and award nomination forms.



The SD MOCK TRIAL Portal



TEAM IN A BOX

Team-in-a-Box was developed to help new and returning teams understand the ins and outs of the competition and is available on our website in the Resources section.

<https://sdmocktrial.org/resources/>



RECRUITING A TEAM - PP. 6-7





HOW TO CREATE A HEALTHY TEAM CULTURE – Pp. 7, 18-19



Master

Expert

Skilled

Learner

Amateur

Novice

COACHING
MASTERY OF THE
PACKET – P. 9



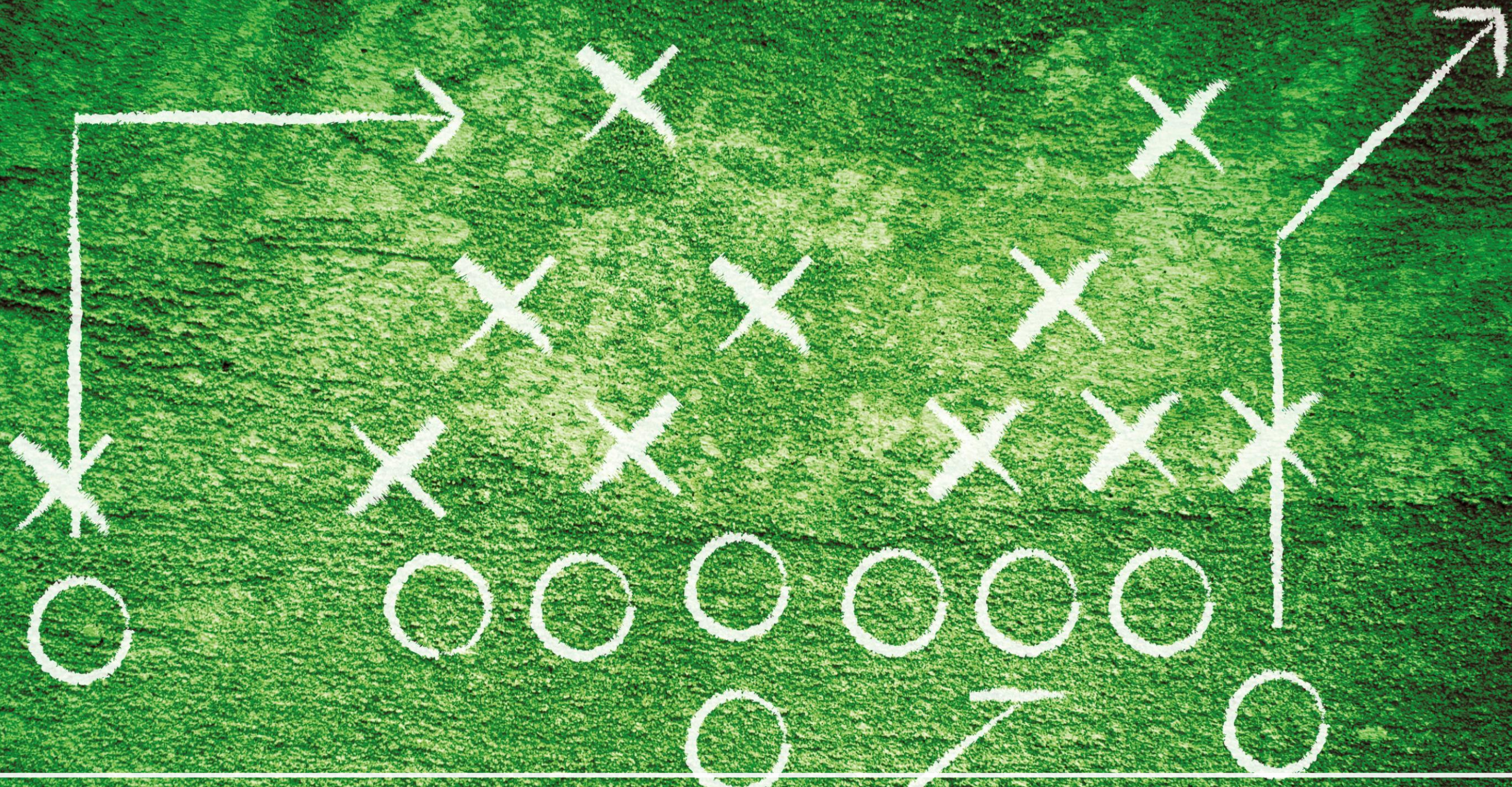
COACHING TRIAL & PRESENTATION SKILLS – PP. 9-11



COACHING SCORING & TIMEKEEPING -
PP. 13-15

• Overview of key witnesses and their testimony • Introduction of Attorneys	- decide) • Mention of applicable law or statutes to be covered
Direct/Re-Direct Examination	
• Questions required straightforward answers and brought out key information for their side of the case. • Attorney properly introduced exhibits and, where appropriate, properly introduced evidence as a matter of record. • Attorney properly phrased and rephrased questions and demonstrated a clear understanding of trial procedures	• Attorney made effective objections to cross-examination questions of their witness when appropriate. • Attorney did not make unnecessary objections and used only those objections listed in the Summary of Evidentiary Objections. • Throughout questioning, the attorney made appropriate use of time. • Attorney avoided leading questions • Did not ask opinion questions unless witness is an

•Scoring Evaluation Criteria



SCRIMMAGES – P. 11

2027 COMPETITION DATES

- **Round 1 - Thursday, January 21**
- **Round 2 – Wednesday, January 27**
- **Round 3 – Tuesday, February 2**
- **Round 4, Awards Ceremony, & Semifinals: Saturday, February 6**
- **Championship Round - Tuesday, February 9**

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School
al Competition

WHAT'S AVAILABLE TO YOU TODAY TO GET STARTED?

- Mock Trial Fact Situation and Legal Authorities
- Witness Statements and Trial Exhibits
- Competition Rules
- Simplified Rules of Evidence
- Code to access the case materials is **1013LEC26**.
- Hard copies of case materials available for pick-up at the court. Email us at sdmocktrial@gmail.com to make arrangements.
- San Diego Competition List of Important Dates



2026 – 2027 CASE

PEOPLE V. MARTZ

People v. Martz

A community-college student faces a felony speed-contest charge after another driver crashes and suffers serious injuries, plus a misdemeanor racing-club charge.

PROSECUTION THEORY

The prosecution says Nova Martz raced Val Foley at an intersection on May 22, 2006. Foley lost control, struck a light pole, and remains non-responsive. Witnesses describe a history of racing challenges, and engine revving before the start, unusually rapid acceleration, and Martz's claimed connection to the Kangaroo Ratz.

DEFENSE THEORY

Martz says there was no race and that the drivers were traveling together to a fast-food stand. The defense says mechanical problems explain the revving and apparent acceleration. A Witness says Foley taunted Martz, but Martz did not respond.

PRETRIAL QUESTION

The defense seeks dismissal of the illegal-racing-club count, arguing that the city ordinance violates due process and Martz's First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

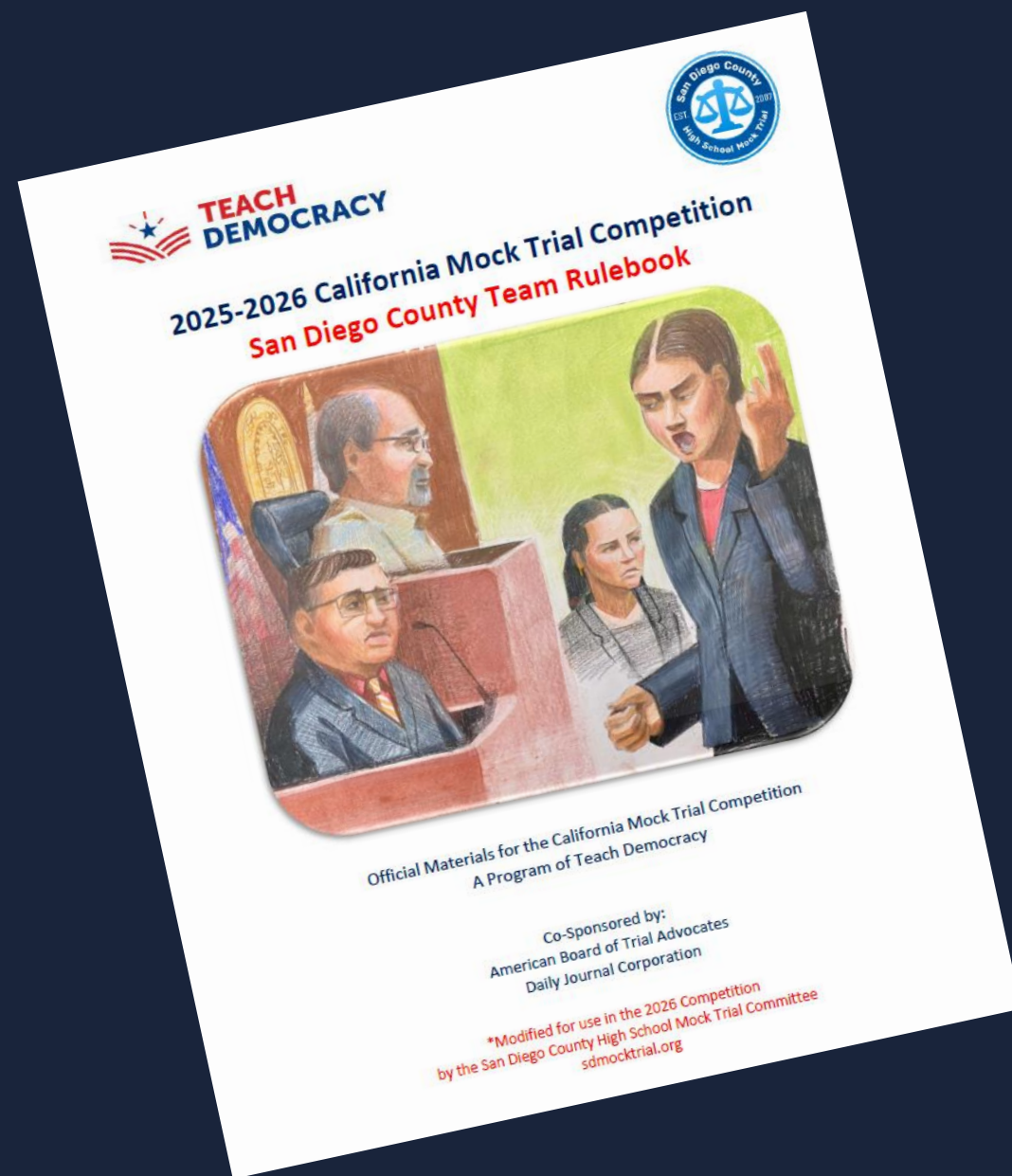
CASE MATERIALS

- 1) Go to www.sdmocktrial.org
- 2) Find the Competition Materials tab on the top menu bar
- 3) Click on Case Packet and enter the code: 1013LEC26

Note: TD prohibits sharing the code with anyone outside of your team or using their materials in invitationals, tournaments and academic camps without their written permission.



WHAT ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY TEAM RULEBOOK?



- It's in the works!
- TD will soon release their Rulebook.
- The San Diego County HSMT Committee will be modifying it to address local practices/issues.
- Expect the San Diego County Rulebook by late September or early October. Check the portal and/or website.

DON'T FORGET! EACH OF YOU YOU MUST EACH COMMIT AS A COACH FOR THE 2026-2027 SEASON

If you fail to submit the Attorney Coach Commitment Form, you will not be on our official committed coach list and you risk:

- Not being in compliance with your school's protocols for communicating with students.
- Not receiving important communications and updates from the Committee.
- Generally making life more complicated for the good volunteers trying to make this competition work.

HOW TO COMMIT TO BEING A COACH

Complete the Attorney
Coach Commitment Form at:

sdmocktrial.org
(on Homepage or Get Involved tab)

Deadline to submit is:

[September 25, 2026](#)

WE WANT TO SUPPORT YOU

- Virtual meeting on October 30 or November 5 to review rules, scoring criteria, and competition requirements. One teacher advisor and one attorney coach from each team must attend one of the meetings.
- Tutorials and tips available on our website at sdmocktrial.org.
- We encourage communication from schools that may be struggling; we can provide mentor teacher advisor, attorney coaches, and direct you to materials.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR TEAM

- Virtual Timekeepers Clinic video and PowerPoint is on the sdmocktrial.org website under Resources.



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MORE EXCITING NEWS!!!

Due to a generous grant and donations to the San Diego Justice Foundation for use by the San Diego County High School Mock Trial Committee, specific funds will be available again this season to support schools new to mock trial, as well as those who have participated in the past to:

- Provide scholarships to cover the \$400 team registration fee.
- Transport teams via bus to and from the court on competition days.
- Provide exhibits!

Applications for these funds is available on the portal or our website at sdmocktrial.org.

Please note: the application must be completed by either the team's teacher advisor or school administrator.



AWARDS

- 1st & 2nd Place Teams
- Outstanding Pretrial Attorney
- Outstanding Attorney
- Outstanding Witness
- Outstanding Clerk and Bailiff
- MVP Award (given at the end of each round of competition)
- Judge David Bartick Award for Civility
- All students receive a Certificate of Participation



HOW WE COMMUNICATE IS KEY!

Website: sdmocktrial.org

- Information and announcements
- Place to register, pay fee, apply for scholarship, submit all required forms, and team roster (one-stop shopping!)
- Shared answer to teacher and coach questions

Portal:

- Much of the same functionality as the website, conveniently accessible on your phone

Email: sdmocktrial@gmail.com for all questions. We will respond promptly. Some questions take more time to answer.

Other: Follow us on INSTAGRAM



SDMocktrial

NOTE: We will not directly email students. They are encouraged to check the website and send questions via teachers or coaches.

A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

This is a competition, but the primary goal is individual growth for each student. The learning process and the experience is our number one priority.



Good citizenship and sportsmanship is paramount . . .

And now, what really makes this
worth the price of admission . . .

Some words of wisdom from some wonderful, experienced coaches