

2026-2027 California Mock Trial Competition

San Diego County Team Rulebook



Official Materials for the California Mock Trial Competition
A Program of Teach Democracy

Co-Sponsored by:
American Board of Trial Advocates
Daily Journal Corporation

*Modified for use in the 2027 Competition
by the San Diego County High School Mock Trial Committee
sdmocktrial.org

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Introduction

This Rulebook sets forth the rules to be used for the January-February 2027 San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition. The San Diego County High School Mock Trial Committee (SD Committee) is planning an in-person competition at the San Diego Superior Court, 1100 Union Street, San Diego.

Administration

Rule 1.1 — Rules

- A.** All mock trials in San Diego County will be governed by the California Mock Trial Team Rulebook, California Case Materials, and the California Mock Trial Rules of Evidence, produced by Teach Democracy, as modified by the SD Committee.
- B.** All participants in the San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition must follow all rules and procedures as specified in the Mock Trial materials or disseminated by the SD Committee. All teams participating in the 2027 State Finals must use the set rules in the California Mock Trial Team Rulebook. Failure of any member or affiliate of a team to adhere to the rules may result in consequences up to and including disqualification or expulsion of that team.

Rule 1.2 — Code of Ethical Conduct

All participants (including observers) are bound by all sections of this Code and agree to abide by the provisions.

- A.** All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and observers, will show courtesy and respect for their opponents and all courthouse staff, judges, attorney coaches, teachers, mock trial staff, and volunteer personnel.
- B.** All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and observers, will show dignity and restraint, irrespective of the outcome of any trial. Trials, contests, and activities will be conducted honestly, fairly, and with civility.
- C.** All students, teachers, and attorney coaches will conform to the highest standards of behavior. Teams may not employ tactics they believe to be wrong or in violation of the Rules. Teams will not willfully violate the Rules of the competition in spirit or in practice. All teams are responsible for ensuring that all observers are aware of the Code.
- D.** Teachers agree to focus on the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition. They shall discourage willful violations of the Rules and/or this Code. Teachers will instruct students as to proper procedure and decorum and will assist their students in understanding and abiding by the letter and the spirit of the competition's Rules and this Code of Ethical Conduct.
- E.** Attorney coaches agree to uphold the highest standards of the legal profession and will zealously encourage fair play to focus on the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition. Attorney coaches are reminded that they must serve as positive role models for the students. They will promote conduct and decorum among their team and fellow coaches in accordance with the letter and 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 (e.g., pretrial, questions, objections, etc.) be substantially the work product of the students.
- F.** By participating in the program, students, teachers, and attorney coaches are presumed to have read and agreed to the provisions of the Code. Violations of this Code of Ethical Conduct may be grounds for disqualification from the competition and/or suspension or expulsion from the program.

Rule 1.3 — School Eligibility

To participate in the State Finals, each county must implement the following procedures:

- A.** A Mock Trial county coordinator must be identified and approved by Teach Democracy. The county coordinator must register their county, agree with the terms and responsibilities set forth by Teach Democracy, and pay county registration fees by set deadlines.
- B.** Each county competition must be composed of schools from their county only. The county coordinator must register their county, agree with the terms and responsibilities set forth by Teach Democracy, and pay county registration fees by set deadlines.
- C.** Working in conjunction with Teach Democracy, the county coordinator must plan and implement a county competition involving only schools from their own county.
- D.** If a school is the only school participating in Mock Trial from a county where no county competition is conducted, that school will be eligible for the State Finals.
- E.** All county competitions must be completed by February 27, 2027. County coordinators must inform Teach Democracy of the winning school's name by February 27, 2027. Should the county's winning school not be able to participate in the State Finals, then the second-place team is eligible to represent the county at the State Finals.
- F.** In addition to registering with their county, all schools and individual competitors must provide information requested by the SD Committee to assist the committee with the Teach Democracy registration.
- G.** Home-schooled students may participate in the Mock Trial Program in one of two ways:
 - 1. As a member of the team at the public school the student would attend if not home-schooled.
 - 2. As a member of an independent team exclusively composed of home-schooled students within their county.Applicants must seek approval from the SD Committee and are subject to Teach Democracy's approval.
- H.** Two small schools may temporarily, for no more than two years, join to form a single Mock Trial team if neither school has a pre-existing Mock Trial Program to pilot the program. For the purposes of the California Mock Trial Program, a "small" school is one with 200 or fewer enrolled students. Applicants must seek approval from their local county coordinator and are subject to Teach Democracy's approval. Such combination teams are eligible to represent their county at the State Finals.
- I.** Mock Trial teams must be officially school based. On a case-by-case basis, non-school-based non-profit organizations (i.e., Boys/Girls Clubs, YMCA, etc.) may be permitted to sponsor a Mock Trial team for students whose schools do not offer the Mock Trial Program. However, attempting to create an 'all-star team' is not permitted. Among the requirements that applicants must demonstrate are a non-profit in good standing, have an operational history as a youth-serving organization, provide adequate insurance, and have a functioning governance structure. Applicants must seek approval from their local county coordinator and are subject to Teach Democracy's approval.

Rule 1.4 — Copyright and Plagiarism

- A.** The California Mock Trial case materials are protected by copyright law and may not be reprinted anywhere, including posting on the Internet, without express permission from Teach Democracy. No participant may upload any portion of the case material to any Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes uploading the case or any part of the case, including the exhibits. In addition, the current California Mock Trial case materials may not be used in invitationals, tournaments, and academic camps without express written permission from Teach Democracy. Any violation of this rule may result in litigation and disqualification of a team or county. However, Teach

Democracy grants all recipients a license to reproduce the exhibits for distribution to California Mock Trial registered and participating teams.

- B. Any alteration or viewing of confidential California Mock Trial case materials posted on Teach Democracy's website will result in immediate school disqualification and potential litigation.
- C. Plagiarism* of any kind is unacceptable. Students' written and oral work must be their own. (*Webster's Dictionary defines plagiarism as "to steal the words, ideas, etc. of another and use them as one's own.")
- D. Trials are open to participating teams and their invitees as permitted by the SD Committee. No intentional scouting is allowed.
- E. Teams may be supplied links on digital platforms so that family members, friends and other team members may observe their team's performance. These links may be shared only with those expressly authorized by the SD Committee. No intentional scouting is allowed, and links may not be shared with teams other than those performing in a particular courtroom. Observers watching on a digital platform may not, under any circumstances, record any portion of a mock trial session.

Rule 1.5 — Scouting

- A. Students, teachers, attorney coaches, and any other persons directly associated with a mock trial team, except for those authorized by the competition administrators, are not allowed to view other teams' trials so long as their team remains in the competition.
- B. Students, teachers, attorney coaches, and any other persons directly associated with a mock trial team are prohibited from contacting students, teachers, and attorney coaches from any other team in any manner to obtain or share information about an opponent. This prohibition is read and will be construed broadly, and it includes, without limitation, any form of personal communication, voice/telephone communication, and/or electronic communication, including electronic mail, instant messaging, and communication or messaging through social media sites.
- C. It is not a violation of this rule for teams to participate voluntarily in practice or scrimmage matches before competition. It is a violation of this rule for teams to seek or share information about opposing teams in rounds of the competition from individuals who observed or participated in such scrimmages, including members of the team competing in that scrimmage.
- D. If any section on rules 1.5 – A. to C. has been violated may be grounds for disqualification from the competition and/or suspension or expulsion from the program.
- E. Any team member, coach, or individual associated with a competing team who intentionally makes a false accusation of a scouting violation against another team shall be subject to immediate disqualification from the competition and may face further disciplinary action, including suspension or permanent removal from the program. False accusations will be treated as a serious breach of integrity and sportsmanship.

Teams

Rule 2.1 — Team Eligibility

- A. A school must compete in their local county competition.
- B. A teacher or school administrator must be identified to serve as the liaison to the SD Committee and will be responsible for submitting all required forms and team registration fee.
- C. All students must be eligible under school district and state rules applicable to involvement in extracurricular activities.
- D. All students must be registered during the academic year as students at the school for which they are competing.
- E. The teacher or school administrator has an affirmative duty to verify each student's eligibility. Submission of the team roster constitutes certification that the status of each student has been

verified.

F. Teach Democracy Rule – Not Applicable to San Diego Competition

G. After **January 8, 2027**, no new students may be added to the team. This also applies to individual teams from counties where two teams per school are allowed. Students must remain in the designated registered team, no substitution between teams. Teams representing a county at the State Finals must be composed of students who registered and participated in the current county winning team.

Rule 2.2 — Team Composition

A. A team must have a minimum of 8 students to participate and may have up to a maximum of 25 students. We encourage teams to use the maximum number of students allowable, including support roles, such as researchers and understudies. We highly encourage teams to have more than the minimum number of students, should there be a need for substitutes/understudies if students are not able to participate in the competition at any given time. As much as possible, students are to evenly divide their duties. Involvement of all possible students in the presentation of the case is reflected in the team presentation/participation score. Pretrial attorneys may not serve as trial attorneys during the same round but may serve as a witness, unofficial timer, or bailiff.

Prosecution Roles	Defense Roles
Pretrial Motion Attorney – 1 student	Pretrial Motion Attorney – 1 student
Trial Attorneys – 2 to 3 students*	Trial Attorneys – 2 to 3 students*
Witnesses – 4 students	Witnesses – 4 students
Clerk – 1 student	Bailiff – 1 student
	(OPTIONAL) Unofficial Timer – 1 student
*A minimum of two trial attorneys with a maximum of three trial attorneys. It is highly recommended that different trial attorneys conduct the opening statement and the closing argument and that each trial attorney conduct at least one direct examination and one cross-examination.	

B. At each trial, a team must have a minimum of eight active students composed of registered team members only. An active student is defined as a student who will be serving a role in a round. In the event of an emergency that would cause a team to be unable to participate with a minimum of eight active students, the team must notify the SD Committee as soon as possible. It is within the sole discretion of the SD Committee to determine that an emergency exists, and the SD Committee will decide whether the team will forfeit or whether the team may continue with less than eight active students for that round without point deductions. The SD Committee will notify the scoring panel if permission has been granted for the team to compete with fewer than eight active students for that round and instruct them not to deduct points. Point deductions should be taken if a team continues with less than eight active students for more than one round.

Active Student* – A minimum of 8 at each trial	
	Prosecution/Defense
Pretrial Motion Attorney	1 Student
Trial Attorneys	2 Students
Witnesses	4 Students
Clerk/Bailiff	1 Student
*An active student is defined as the student that will be serving a role in a trial.	

C. A trial team lineup (a list of active students for a round) must be submitted prior to each trial. The trial team lineup must identify the eight minimum active students and their roles. No changes may be made after submission and students must perform the roles as identified on the trial team lineup. The bailiff and clerk should distribute the trial team lineup to the judge, scoring attorneys, and opposing team. For the San Diego County competition, teams must add student photos to the trial team lineup but may not add any other information except as permitted by these rules.

- D. If any section of Rule 2.2 A or B has been violated, scorers may deduct up to five points from the team's participation score. Scorers have discretion to deduct up to three points from the team score for violations of Rule 2.2 C.

Rule 2.3 — Team Withdrawal

- A. If a team needs to withdraw from a competition, the teacher must notify the SD Committee as soon as possible.
- B. Competition registration fees are non-refundable after January 8, 2027.
- C. If a team is eligible to advance to the State Finals or national competition and decides not to participate, the team must notify the SD Committee by February 26, 2027.

Rule 2.4 — Wild Card Teams (Teach Democracy Rule – Not Applicable to San Diego Competition)

The Trial

Rule 3.1 — The Case

- A. The case material contains the sources for the Mock Trial Program. These sources include the fact situation, witness statements, all the pretrial materials, charges, exhibits, rules of evidence, stipulations, role descriptions, Mock Trial procedures and California Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence.
- B. The fact situation is a set of indisputable facts.
- C. Stipulations may not be disputed at trial.
- D. Stipulations will be considered part of the record and already admitted into evidence.
- E. Stipulations and charges will not be read into the record.

Rule 3.2 — Trial Procedures

- A. The Mock Trial Competition is a bench trial. Attorneys and witnesses cannot verbally address the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury (i.e., "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury...").
- B. When the trial begins, the judge will ask the active students, teachers, and attorney coaches to introduce themselves. Other than the bailiff and clerk when distributing the trial team lineup, active students must not communicate with the scoring attorneys until the conclusion of the trial.
- C. Teams will be identified by team code only and not by school name.
- D. All students are required to wear appropriate courtroom attire. Students, teachers, attorney coaches, and observers are prohibited from wearing clothing that identifies their school.
- E. At least one attorney coach or teacher must be in the courtroom during the trial. Teachers, attorney coaches, and students are to remain in the courtroom throughout the trial to avoid disrupting the trial. Observers may leave and reenter the courtroom if they can do so without disrupting the mock trial. If a scheduled team is not present in the assigned courtroom within 30 minutes, that team forfeits the trial and is subject to possible disqualification (subject to the discretion of the SD Committee).
- F. Teams are required to bring six (6) copies of their trial team lineup to their assigned courtroom for each round of the competition which will be distributed to the judge, scoring attorneys, and opposing team. Teams competing in San Diego County shall add active students' photos to their trial team lineup but may not add any other information not permitted by this rule. In addition, teams are required to bring to their assigned courtroom six (6) copies of the award nomination form filled out with the active students' names for that round which will be distributed to the judge and scoring attorneys. A fillable trial team lineup form and award nomination form can be found at www.sdmocktrial.org on the Competition Materials tab and/or on the Teacher/Attorney Coach Portal.
- G. All active students must be in the courtroom at the scheduled time, ready to begin. They are to

remain in the courtroom throughout the trial. Incomplete teams must begin the trial without their missing members or with their substitutes. Mock Trial teams traveling to the downtown Superior Court Central Courthouse should allow for traffic delays. Teams shall allow for the additional time it takes to get through security screening at the courthouse entrance. Another active team member (if available) may fill in as an emergency substitute for the remainder of that trial.

- H. Recesses will not be allowed for any reason (unless authorized by the SD Committee or judge).
- I. Use of laptop computers, tablets, cellular/smart phones or other electronic devices during trial is prohibited, unless permitted by these rules.
- J. At the State Finals, it is mandatory for at least one team representative to attend the announcement of the finalists for the Championship Trial and attend the finalists meeting immediately following the announcement. If a team representative is not present, the team forfeits the Championship Trial, and the third-ranked team will take the absent team's place in the Championship Trial.
- K. To participate in the San Diego County competition, teams have agreed to allow video recording and still photography for use by the SD Committee. Teams may only video/audio record a trial involving their school and must get approval from the opposing team. Recording is for educational purposes only. A team's trial recordings can only be shared with current team (including teachers and coaches). The recordings may not be posted, streamed, or shared with anyone else. Teams are also to be notified of this rule as any violations could result in sanctions to the team up to and including disqualification. Neither the SD Committee nor Teach Democracy will accept any video for complaint purposes.
- L. Other than the exhibits provided in the trial materials, no other illustrative aids of any kind may be used.
- M. Props, costumes, and theatrical makeup are prohibited. Costuming includes hairstyles and clothing accessories that are specific to a role in the case. In keeping with the educational philosophy and objectives of the Mock Trial Program, teams should concentrate on realistically presenting the trial, with witnesses wearing appropriate courtroom attire and using their normal speaking voices, with no artificial accents. Portrayals of racial, ethnic, and gender stereotypes are inappropriate and are not allowed.
- N. Gender-neutral names allow students of any gender to play the role of any witness. The SD Mock Trial permits active students, including witnesses, to indicate on the trial team lineup, or on the record, their preferred pronouns. No points should be deducted for using the wrong pronoun. During the trial, questions regarding gender, race, or physical characteristics not included in the official case materials are not allowed. A witness is prohibited from referring to their own physical traits or gender as well as the physical traits or gender of other witnesses where such information is not included in any witness statement. (For example, a witness cannot call attention to their size to show the inability to complete some physical act included in the case materials or state that the witness was treated differently because of their gender.) An attorney is likewise prohibited from making arguments pointing out physical traits of a witness not otherwise included in the case materials. Such references are unfair extrapolations, see Rule 3.8 for point deductions. Teams are not prohibited, however, from raising issues about general or common human traits and abilities relevant to the case.

Rule 3.3 — Trial Communication

- A. Once the trial has begun, communication (including, but not limited to, signaling, texting, and passing notes) is prohibited between active students and any teacher, attorney coaches, non-active students, or observers.
- B. The Mock Trial Competition is a bench trial. Attorneys and witnesses cannot verbally address the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.
- C. Communication between trial attorneys is allowed during the trial but must be non-disruptive.
- D. The defendant may sit at the counsel table and communicate with the defense attorneys. All

communication must be non-disruptive to the trial.

- E. After the pretrial motion, the pretrial attorney may not sit with the trial attorneys and the pretrial attorney may not communicate with the trial attorneys at any time during the trial.
- F. Once the trial has begun, other than what is permitted by these rules, there must be no communication among active students, except for the 30-Second Rule.
- G. Scorers must deduct five points from the team score for each violation of Rules 3.3 A or E and F. Scorers may impose up to two points from the team score for each violation of Rules 3.3 B or C and D, or if communication permitted by this rule is disruptive.

Rule 3.4 — Conduct of the Pretrial Motion

- A. The defense will argue the pretrial motion first.
- B. Each attorney arguing a pretrial motion has four minutes to present a statement and two minutes for rebuttal. During these proceedings, pretrial attorneys must be prepared to answer questions from the judge to clarify their position.
- C. No objections are allowed during pretrial arguments. Two points must be deducted for each objection made during pretrial arguments.
- D. To present a position most persuasively, attorneys should carefully review and become familiar with the materials provided in the mock trial case materials.
- E. Additional background research may supplement their understanding of the issues at hand, but such supplemental materials may not be cited in arguments.
- F. No written pretrial motion memoranda may be submitted at trial.
- G. The pretrial motion, motions entering exhibits into evidence, and motion to strike testimony are the only motions allowed. All other motions are prohibited. If a motion is made that is not listed in this section, two points may be deducted from the team's total team presentation/participation score.
- H. The judge's rule on the pretrial motion is final. If the judge rules in favor of the defense, the bracketed text in the facts and witness statements may not be referred to or discussed during the subsequent trial. Teams referring to or discussing bracketed text (after a judge has ruled in the favor of the defense) is an unfair extrapolation, see Rule 3.8 – Unfair Extrapolation.

Rule 3.5 — Attorneys

- A. The prosecution presents the opening statement and closing argument first.
- B. The attorneys may not make their opening statement, conduct their direct examination/cross-examination of witnesses, or make a closing argument from the well. They must remain behind the podium or counsel table. Attorneys may seek the permission of the judge to enter the well for the limited purpose of presenting an exhibit to a witness or questioning a witness about an exhibit or their witness statement. Up to two points may be deducted per attorney's score per violation if any section of this rule has been violated.
- C. Attorneys may conduct a re-direct examination when appropriate. No re-cross-examination is allowed. Witnesses may not be recalled to the stand.
- D. The attorney who conducts the direct examination of a witness is the only person allowed to make objections to the cross-examination of that witness. The attorney who conducts the cross-examination of a witness is the only person allowed to make objections during the direct examination of the witness. Scorers may deduct up to two points from the offending team's score for each objection made by the wrong attorney.
- E. Attorneys may use paper notes while presenting their cases. Notes in any digital format or on a device may not be kept or used during trial.
- F. The Mock Trial Competition proceedings are governed by the California Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence (as modified for San Diego County) in the case materials. Only specified types of objections

listed in the case materials will be recognized in the competition. Other evidentiary rules may not be used at the trial.

- G. The pretrial motion, motions entering exhibits into evidence, and motion to strike testimony are the only motions allowed. All other motions are prohibited. If a motion is made that is not listed in this section, scorers may deduct up to two points from the team's total team presentation/participation score.
- H. No objections are allowed during opening statements or closing arguments. The judge will be responsible for handling any legally inappropriate statements made in the closing, while scorers will also consider the closing argument criteria. Two points must be deducted for each objection made during opening statements or closing arguments.

Rule 3.6— Physical Evidence

- A. The SD Committee will provide teams with physical evidence listed under the heading "Physical Evidence" in the case materials for each trial. All exhibits will be 22" x 28" reproductions. If more than one exhibit is contained on one page on the official case, the exhibits cannot be separated at any time.
- B. No other physical evidence will be allowed. All physical evidence and witnesses found in this case, but not made physically available for trial, are unavailable and their availability may not be questioned.
- C. Procedures for introducing items into evidence: Attorneys may introduce physical exhibits, if any are listed under the heading "Physical Evidence," provided that the objects correspond to the description given in the case materials. Below are the steps to follow when introducing physical evidence (maps, diagrams, etc.). All items are presented before trial.
 - 1. Present the item to an attorney for the opposing team before trial. If that attorney objects to the use of the item, the judge will rule whether the evidence is appropriate or not.
 - 2. Before beginning the trial, mark all exhibits for identification. Address the judge as follows: "Your Honor, I ask that this item be marked for identification as Exhibit #___."
 - 3. When a witness is on the stand testifying about the exhibit, the attorney may show the item to the witness and ask if the witness recognizes the item. If the witness does, the attorney may ask the witness to explain it or answer questions about it. This shows how the exhibit is relevant to the trial.
- D. Moving the item into evidence: Exhibits must be introduced into evidence if attorneys wish the court to consider the items themselves as evidence, not just the testimony about the exhibits. Attorneys must ask to move the item into evidence during the witness examination or before they finish presenting their case.
 - 1. "Your Honor, I ask that this item (describe) be moved into evidence as People's (or Defendant's) Exhibit # and request that the court so admit it."
 - 2. At this point, opposing counsel may make any proper objections.
 - 3. The judge will then rule on whether the item may be admitted into evidence.
- E. Whether a team introduces, uses, and moves the physical evidence into evidence is entirely optional, but all physical evidence must be accessible to both teams.
- F. Evidence should not be altered in any way. Witnesses and attorneys are not permitted to mark on the exhibits, including separating exhibits that are contained on one page on the official case. Any alterations to the exhibits may be grounds for disqualification from the competition.
- G. Illustrative aids of any kind are prohibited, including but not limited to electronic or light projected aids.
- H. The official diagrams establish only relative positions. Because the scale (if any) is approximate, the diagrams cannot be used to definitively establish distances. The issue of distances should be based on the witnesses' testimony and is a matter of fact for judges.

Rule 3.7— Witnesses

- A.** Although witnesses are excluded from the trial proceedings in actual trials, for educational purposes, witnesses in the Mock Trial Competition will remain in the courtroom for the entire trial. Witnesses will sit in designated seating in the courtroom.
- B.** The fact situation, witness statements, stipulations, and exhibits are the official case materials and make up the sole source of information for testimony.
- C.** A witness can only testify to their own witness statement and any portion of the fact situation, stipulations, and exhibits of which they would reasonably have knowledge. Witnesses may not testify or respond to another witness' testimony, unless otherwise stated in the stipulations.
- D.** Unless otherwise stated, attorneys may not solicit information from a witness that requires the witness to testify to information from another witness' statement or information not included in their own statement except as permitted in Rule 3.7 C.
- E.** The witness statements contained in the case material should be viewed as signed statements made to the police by the witnesses. Unless otherwise specified, a witness can be impeached if the witness contradicts their witness statement or any portion of the fact situation, exhibits, or stipulations of which they could reasonably have knowledge using the procedures as outlined in the case material.
- F.** Because this is a mock trial, witnesses may not be treated as hostile witnesses.
- G.** All witnesses must be called in the allotted time. If the direct examination attorney runs out of time without calling one or more witnesses, the direct examination attorney and the witness will each automatically receive a score of zero for each witness not called, and the cross-examination attorney will automatically be awarded ten points for each witness not called. Once the time allotted for witnesses has ended, direct examination attorneys may not call any other witnesses.
- H.** Cross-examination is required for all witnesses. If the cross-examination attorney does not cross one or more witnesses, the cross-examination attorney will receive a cross-examination score of zero for the witnesses.
- I.** Witnesses are not allowed to use notes while testifying during trial.

Rule 3.8 — Unfair Extrapolation

- A.** It is each student's responsibility to work closely within the record.
- B.** An unfair extrapolation (UE) occurs when a witness creates a material fact not included in their official record. A material fact is one that would likely impact the outcome of the case.
- C.** Witnesses may, however, make fair extrapolations from the materials. A fair extrapolation is one in which a witness makes a non-material reasonable inference based on their official record. A fair extrapolation does not alter the material facts of the case.
- D.** Unfair extrapolations are best tackled through impeachment and the closing argument. They should be dealt with by attorneys during the trial. (See Impeachment during Cross-Examination in the case packet.)
- E.** Attorneys shall not ask questions that call for information outside the scope of the case materials or request an unfair extrapolation.
- F.** If a witness is asked for information not contained in the witness's statement, the answer must be consistent with the statement and may not materially affect the witness's testimony or any substantive issue of the case.
- G.** If a witness provides UE in testimony, the opposing attorney may make a UE objection.
- H.** When a UE objection is made, possible rulings by a judge may be one of the following:
 - 1. No extrapolation has occurred. Objection overruled.
 - 2. An unfair extrapolation has occurred. Objection sustained.
 - 3. The extrapolation was fair. Objection overruled.

- I. The decision of the judge regarding extrapolations or evidentiary matters is final. Scoring attorneys must take the judge's ruling on unfair extrapolations into consideration when determining the point deduction.
- J. Witnesses and attorneys making unfair extrapolations and attorneys who ask questions that require the witness to answer with an unfair extrapolation should have one point deducted from their individual scores.
- K. If a team has an individual or several competitors making unfair extrapolations, in addition to the individual point deductions, up to five points may be deducted from the offending team's presentation/participation score.

Rule 3.9 — Clerk, Bailiff, and Unofficial Timers

- A. The Mock Trial Competition involves timed presentations. The clerk is the official neutral timekeeper for the trial. The clerk must keep accurate time for both teams, provide time remaining warnings, and complete a timesheet. In addition, any member of the defense team may serve as an unofficial timer. This unofficial timer must be identified before the trial begins. To avoid timing issues, both the clerk and unofficial timer must sit next to each other during the trial and may communicate with each other.
- B. The clerk and unofficial timer must bring a stopwatch or digital timing device, the official timesheet, and official timecards to each trial. Cell phones may be used as timing devices and/or calculators. If using cell phones to track time, phones must be kept in airplane mode with Wi-Fi and notifications put on silent. Please note the statewide competition will not allow cell phones to be used to track time. The official timesheet and timecards can be found at www.sdmocktrial.org. Timecards must be printed on white paper (card stock recommended but not required). The timecards will have the following time warnings:
 - 2 minutes
 - 1 minute
 - 30 seconds
 - Stop
- C. Modification of time intervals is not permitted.
- D. Running of the opposing team's time is not allowed. The running of time is best addressed at the time when the witness is on the stand and dealt with by opposing the attorney through objections such as non-responsive or narrative. The scoring attorneys will use their discretion to determine independently how many points, up to five points, will be taken off the offending witness's score, should they determine that a witness is running the opposing team's time. In addition, if it repeatedly happens, the judge may admonish the witness.
- E. Each team will have 40 minutes to present its case, including the pretrial motion. The time may be utilized however they choose, but the maximum allowable totals for each section must be observed. Time limits for each section are as follows:
 - Pretrial Motion (4 minutes) and Rebuttal (2 minutes)
 - Opening Statement/Closing Argument (9 minutes) and Rebuttal (1 minute)
 - Direct/Re-direct Examination (14 minutes)
 - Cross-Examination (10 minutes)
- F. The time will start when each attorney starts to speak (i.e., first word of pretrial, opening, direct, cross-examination, and closing). Examples include but are not limited to:
 - "May it please the court..."
 - "Your Honor..."
 - "Please state your name for the court..."
- G. The time will be stopped when:
 - Witnesses are called to the stand and are sworn in by the bailiff

- Attorneys make objections and judge rules on objection
 - Judge questions attorneys and witnesses
 - Judge offers their observations
 - A witness asks for a question to be repeated
 - Attorneys request the time remaining (Note: The clerk must provide the time remaining for both teams when an attorney makes a request.) Requests for the clerk to provide time remaining, also known as time checks, are limited to four per team during the trial.
- H. The time will not stop while an attorney or witness approaches an exhibit. Time will not be rounded off and must be measured to the whole second.
- I. One minute is automatically reserved for rebuttal at the conclusion of the closing argument. Only issues that were addressed in an opponent's closing argument may be raised during the rebuttal. Formal reservation of rebuttal time is not required.
- J. Both visual and verbal warnings will be given at two-minute, one-minute, and 30 seconds before the end of each section. The time remaining cards must be displayed in a manner that ensures that there is a clear view for the attorneys and judge. The clerk will stop students (both visually and verbally) at the end of the allotted time for each section. Thus, there will be no allowance for overtime. Two points must be deducted from the clerk's score if any section of this rule has been violated. Scorers may deduct additional points from the clerk's score if there are multiple violations of the rule.
- K. If timing variations occur of 15 seconds or more at the completion of any task during the trial, the timers will notify the judge immediately that a time discrepancy has occurred. Any time discrepancies less than 15 seconds are usually not considered a violation unless there is an intentional error or repeated errors on the part of the clerk. No time discrepancies will be entertained after the trial concludes. The judge shall determine whether to accept the clerk's time or make a time adjustment.
- L. At the end of the pretrial motion and the trial, the clerk will time the 30-Second Rule.
- M. The judge and attorney scorers will be allowed 10 minutes for debriefing. The clerk will time the debriefing. The clerk will provide the judge and attorney scorers with a 2-minute, 1-minute, and 30 second visual warning, and will advise when 10 minutes has expired.
- N. The clerk will not be scored on timing the debriefing, consultations, and any formal presentations regarding irregularities. No extensions of time will be granted.
- O. The bailiff will call the court to order and swear in the witnesses. In addition, the bailiff must bring a copy of the 2026-2027 Team Rulebook and Case Packet should the judge need to clarify an issue or question.
- P. Before calling the court to order, the bailiff will remind the audience to turn off all cell phones and that ABSOLUTELY NO FOOD is allowed in the courtroom. Water is OK. If observers must step outside, they should do so quietly to avoid disrupting the trial.
- Q. The bailiff will call the court to order using the following language:
- "All rise, Superior Court of the State of California, County of San Diego, Department _____, is now in session. The Honorable _____ presiding. (Allow time for the judge to take the bench.) Please be seated and come to order."
- R. The bailiff will swear in the witnesses by using the following language:
- "Do you solemnly affirm that the testimony you are about to give will faithfully and truthfully conform to the facts and rules of the Mock Trial Competition?"

Rule 3.10 — Unreasonable Running of Opponent's Time / "Filibustering"

- A. Although a witness may be permitted to give a brief, responsive answer other than a simple "yes" or "no" to questions on cross-examination, consistent with common trial practice, no witness may provide non-responsive or narrative answers on cross-examination to consume the other team's

cross-examination time. If an attorney believes a witness is unreasonably running time, in addition to objecting that an answer is “nonresponsive” or a “narrative,” the opposing attorney can object saying, “Objection, Your Honor. The witness is unreasonably running time.” If the judge determines there has been an unreasonable running of time, the witness may be admonished by the judge and the judge will direct the attorney scorers to deduct up to five points from the offending witness’s score.

- B. The scoring attorneys will use their discretion to determine independently how many points will be deducted from the offending team’s score for filibustering and whether the judge has directed the witness to answer more responsively.
- C. If a team has more than one active student who unreasonably runs time and/or filibusters, in addition to the individual point deductions, up to five points may be deducted from the offending team’s participation score.
- D. Any effort to deliberately consume the opposing team’s time through these techniques may also violate the Code of Conduct and may be sanctionable under Rule 1.2.

Rule 3.11 — Courtroom Artist

- A. The sketch must be created and completed by the courtroom artist during the official round without the help of any source or person. The artist is not allowed to take photos during the trial to reference when creating their sketch. The artist cannot start sketching until the court is called to order by the bailiff. See Sketch Artist Rules and Criteria for additional guidelines and information.
- B. **Journalist (Teach Democracy Rule – Not Applicable to San Diego Competition)**

Rule 3.12 — 30-Second Rule

- A. There will be 30 seconds provided, if needed, at the end of the pretrial and at the end of the trial for active students from each team to confer with their team’s teacher and/or attorney coach to discuss any trial irregularities.
- B. If there are any irregularities regarding the rules of the competition which a team would like the judge and scorers to be aware of, one active student will have 30 seconds to orally note the irregularities to the court. Attorney coaches may not directly make claims on behalf of the team.
- C. The active student claiming an irregularity must be able to point to the specific incident of misconduct and cite the corresponding rule in the team rulebook and/or case material to the judge using the following script:

“Your Honor, the Prosecution/Defense identified a substantial trial irregularity (or irregularities). The opposing team [specify team member] violated Rule [specify rule and section] by [explain violation]. [Optional] The violation worked to the advantage of the other team and disadvantaged our team by [explain impact].”

One active student arguing against a claimed rule violation, in 30 seconds, should cite specific conduct and rules which support their position.

- D. The judge will hear arguments in favor of and against an alleged rule violation/irregularity and decide whether a rule violation occurred. The judge’s decision will be final.
- E. If the judge determines a violation has occurred, and there is not a specified mandatory point deduction outlined in the team rulebook, the judge will direct the scoring attorneys to take the violation into consideration. The scoring attorneys will use their discretion to determine independently how many points (if any) will be deducted from the individual or offending team’s score. If the judge does not rule on a claimed rule violation or chooses to defer to the attorney scorer’s observation, the scoring attorneys may use their discretion to determine independently how many points (if any) should

be deducted from the individual or offending team's score.

- F. Claims of irregularities regarding the rules of the competition are not to be used to argue additional points of law or rebut opponent's arguments.
- G. Arguing for hyper-technical interpretations of the rules, especially when designed to embarrass others or to gain an unfair advantage, is prohibited and up to five points may be deducted from the participation score of the team asserting the hyper-technical claim.

Evaluation and Team Advancement

Rule 4.1 — Rule Interpretation

- A. The rules are designed to introduce the procedures of law to participants and to foster good sportsmanship. Interpretations of the rules should be guided by common sense.
- B. No bench conferences are allowed.
- C. Unless a specific point deduction is provided in the rules, each scorer will determine the appropriate point deduction individually.
- D. Any specific point deduction without a designated category can be deducted from the team participation and presentation category.
- E. The SD Committee, in its sole discretion, ultimately resolves any disputes over interpretation or application of the rules.
- F. All decisions of the judge and scoring attorneys are final. No exceptions.

Rule 4.2 — Scoring Panel

- A. The competition "scoring panel" will typically consist of three or more attorneys. Judges do not score the mock trials; they preside and render the verdict.
- B. The trial judge will be an active or retired judicial officer. If no judicial officers are available to fill all judge roles, the SD Committee may invite an experienced attorney to serve as a judge.
- C. San Diego County Conflict of Interest Policy: Attorneys who have a child (or close friend or relative) competing on a high school team during the 2026-2027 San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition season (September 2026 through February 2027) are ineligible to serve as scorers during the competition. Attorneys who serve as an adviser, coach, judge, or scorer for practices or unofficial scrimmages for any San Diego County high school team or teams during the current competition season are ineligible to serve as an attorney scorer for the 2027 competition.

Rule 4.3 — Evaluation and Scoring

- A. Each scoring attorney will use the evaluation and scoring criteria to assign a numerical value (1-10) to individual and team presentations.
- B. Clerk and bailiff are evaluated using a scale of 1-5. All other roles are evaluated on a scale of 1-10. On the five-point scale, scoring attorneys should consider a "3" as a starting point and move up or down based on the presentation. On the ten-point scale, scoring attorneys should consider a "5" as a starting point and move up or down based on the presentation.
- C. Scoring attorneys must award points individually and not with consultation from other scoring attorneys.
- D. Some scores are weighted and therefore can affect a team's score more dramatically. These include the pretrial motion (x2) and the closing argument (x2).
- E. The scoring attorneys will use the evaluation and scoring criteria to score the individual presentation in each category.
- F. The scoring attorneys are not evaluating the legal merits of the case.

Rule 4.4 — Rankings and Matching

A. The side (prosecution/defense) assignments and matching for the first round will be random. For the second round, the team side assignments will be flipped and team matching will be based on a ranking and matching system defined below. Any rounds beyond that will be based on the same ranking and matching system.

B. Ranking

Teams will be ranked in the following order:

1. Win/Loss Record - equals the number of rounds won or lost by a team determined by the total number of raw points given in the trial. For example:
 - Team “A” has a total of 187 raw points.
 - Team “B” has a total of 176 raw points.
 - The winner of the trial is Team “A” with 187 raw points.

If there are any ties in category one, teams will be ranked based on the following order:

2. Total Number of Scoring Attorneys Who Gave a Team the Highest Number of Points in the Round, otherwise known as a “winning ballot,” or in any preceding rounds. For example:
 - If all three attorney scorers give Team “A” the greatest number of points on their respective ballots, Team “A” would accumulate THREE winning ballots.
 - If two attorney scorers give Team “A” the greatest number of points and one attorney scorer gives Team “B” the greatest number of points, Team “A” would accumulate TWO winning ballots and Team “B” would accumulate ONE winning ballot.

If there are any ties in category two, teams will be ranked based on the following order:

3. Total Number of Points accumulated in each round.

If there are any ties in category three, teams will be ranked based on the following order:

4. Point Spread Against Opponents – the point spread is the difference between the total points earned by the team whose tie is being broken less the total points of that team’s opponent in each previous round. The greatest sum of these point spreads will break the tie in favor of the team with the largest cumulative point spread.

C. Matching

Brackets will be determined in the following order:

- Following round one, teams will be ranked as described in Rule 4.4 B and brackets will be created.
- If a bracket is equal to or greater than twelve teams, the bracket will be split in half to create two sub-brackets for matching purposes. SD Committee reserves the right to modify the size of a bracket or brackets to ensure the opportunity for teams to conduct two rounds as prosecution and two rounds as defense.
- To the greatest extent, the team at the top of the bracket will be matched with the team at the bottom of the bracket. Then the next highest team with the next lowest team within the bracket and so on until all teams are matched.
- If there is an odd number of teams in a bracket, the team at the top of the bracket will be matched with the top team from the next lower bracket, to the greatest extent.

D. To the greatest extent possible, teams will alternate side presentations in subsequent rounds and will not meet the same opponent twice. Bracket integrity in matching may supersede alternate side presentation. However, the SD Committee reserves the right to match teams to ensure each team performs two rounds as prosecution and two rounds as defense. All teams must agree to take whichever team or side (prosecution or defense) they are assigned and to make any changes requested by the SD Committee that may be necessary for the good of the overall competition.

Rule 4.5 — Forfeit

- A.** All active students must be in the courtroom at the appointed time, ready to begin the round. Incomplete teams must begin the trial without their missing members or with their alternates. If a scheduled team is not present in the assigned courtroom within 30 minutes, that team forfeits the trial and is subject to possible disqualification (subject to the discretion of the SD Committee). Mock Trial teams traveling to the downtown Superior Court Central Courthouse should allow for traffic delays. All competitors shall allow for the considerable time it takes to get through security screening upon entering the courthouse.
- B.** A forfeiting team will receive a loss, zero ballots, and points equal to 50% of the score of the team that received the fewest points in that round.
- C.** The team scheduled to go against the forfeiting team will receive a win. That team will receive three ballots and points equal to the average of all winning competing teams in that round.

Rule 4.6 — Semifinal and Championship Round

- A.** The two winning teams from the semifinal round will compete in the Championship Round.
- B.** The team with the most ballots over the preceding rounds, including the semifinal rounds, will select the side assignment of their choosing. In the event of a tie, the highest cumulative point score over all the preceding rounds, including the semifinal round, will select the side assignment of their choosing.

Rule 4.7 — Awards

- A.** An award ceremony for the San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition will be held on February 6, 2027. Awards will be given as follows:
 - Prosecution Pretrial Attorney – 4 awards
 - Defense Pretrial Attorney – 4 awards
 - Prosecution Attorney – 5 awards
 - Defense Attorney – 5 awards
 - Prosecution Witness – 5 awards
 - Defense Witness – 5 awards
 - Clerk – up to 2 awards
 - Bailiff – up to 2 awards
 - David H. Bartick Civility AwardThe SD Committee reserves the right to bestow additional awards.
- B.** The first and second place teams will receive a school plaque and first or second place ribbons for all competitors. Third and fourth place teams will also be specially acknowledged. All students will receive a Certificate of Participation.
- C.** Teams will select a most valuable player (MVP) from their opposing team for each round of competition. At the end of each round and before the debrief, each team will be given a few minutes to confer to select a student from the opposing team who they feel should be recognized with a MVP award. Criteria for this award include the student's demonstration of skill in the performance of the student's trial role, adherence to mock trial rules, civility, and collegiality towards the opposing team. All students who are selected as a MVP will receive a special certificate and be acknowledged during the award ceremony.

Summary of Pretrial Motion Procedures

Judges are encouraged to challenge the attorneys with questions about the case law during pretrial arguments and are encouraged to try to ask a balanced number of questions for each side. No objections are allowed during pretrial arguments.

- ☐ The bailiff will call the court to order.
- ☐ The judge asks the defense to summarize the arguments made in the motion. The defense has four minutes. The judge may interrupt to ask clarifying questions. Time is stopped when the judge is asking questions, and when the pretrial attorney is responding to a question.
- ☐ The judge asks the prosecution to summarize the arguments made in the motion. The prosecution has four minutes. The judge may interrupt to ask clarifying questions. Time is stopped when the judge is asking questions, and when the pretrial attorney is responding to a question.
- ☐ The judge offers the defense two minutes of rebuttal time. The rebuttal time is used to counter the opponent's arguments. It is not to be used to raise new issues.
- ☐ The judge offers the prosecution two minutes of rebuttal time.
- ☐ At the end of the oral arguments, before ruling, the judge asks students if they would like 30 seconds to consult with their teacher/attorney coaches regarding any substantial irregularities.
- ☐ The judge will rule on the motion and begin trial.

Summary of Trial Procedures

- ☐ Attorneys present physical evidence for inspection.
- ☐ Judge states charges against the defendant.
- ☐ The prosecution delivers its opening statement. No questioning by judge during opening statements.
- ☐ The defense may choose to deliver its opening statement at this point or may wait to open after the prosecution has completed its case in chief.
- ☐ The prosecution calls its witnesses and conducts their direct examination.
- ☐ After each prosecution witness is called to the stand and has been examined by the prosecution, the defense cross-examines the witness.
- ☐ After each cross-examination, the prosecution may conduct a re-direct examination of its own witnesses if necessary.
- ☐ After the prosecution presents all its witnesses, the defense delivers its opening statement (if it did not do so earlier).
- ☐ The defense calls its witnesses and conducts direct examination.
- ☐ After each defense witness is called to the stand and has been examined by the defense, the prosecution cross-examines the witness.
- ☐ After each cross-examination, the defense may conduct re-direct examination of its own witnesses if necessary.
- ☐ The prosecution gives its closing argument, and then defense presents its closing argument. No questioning by judge during closing arguments.
- ☐ Prosecution and defense present rebuttal arguments.
- ☐ At the end of the trial before announcing the verdict, the judge asks students if they would like 30 seconds to consult with their teacher/attorney coaches regarding any substantial trial irregularities. If there are any, one team member has 30 seconds to note them orally to the court. Judge rules on any alleged rule violations.
- ☐ Judge allows teams two minutes to decide who from the opposing team will receive the MVP certificate.
- ☐ As students are conferring, the judge should remind scoring attorneys to complete and submit score sheets. The judge should also request court monitors to collect award nomination forms.
- ☐ Ask students to announce the opposing team's MVP.

- ❑ Judge conducts a short debrief of the trial with the scoring attorneys (not to exceed 10 min.).
- ❑ Judge announces the verdict.

Evaluation Criteria

Pretrial Motion (x2) – Pretrial Attorney
• A clear and concise presentation of issues and appropriate use of case materials. • Well-developed, reasoned, and organized arguments. • A solid understanding of legal reasoning behind the arguments. • Responded well to judge’s questions and maintained continuity in argument. • Effective rebuttal countered the opponent’s argument.
Opening Statement – Attorney
• Provided a case overview. • A theme/theory of the case was identified. • Overview of key witnesses and their testimony. • Introduction of attorneys. • Outlined burden of proof. • Mention of applicable law or statutes to be covered. • Request for relief (what the side is asking the judge to decide).
Direct/Re-Direct Examination – Attorney
• Questions required straightforward answers and brought out key information for their side of the case. • Properly introduced exhibits and, where appropriate, properly introduced evidence as a matter of record. • Properly phrased and rephrased questions and demonstrated a clear understanding of trial procedures. • Responded to objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of competition. • Made effective objections to cross-examination questions of their witness when appropriate. • Did not make unnecessary objections and used only those objections listed in the Summary of Evidentiary Objections. • Made appropriate use of time throughout questioning. • Avoided leading questions. • Did not ask opinion questions unless the witness is an expert.
Cross-Examination – Attorney
• Made effective objections to direct examination (of the witness they cross-examined) when appropriate. • Used narrow questions that suggested a yes or no answer and did not allow the witness to provide a narrative explanation. • Responded to objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of the competition. • Followed protocol to introduce or object to exhibits. • Utilized objection(s) to forward the case and not just to disrupt the other side’s direct examination; unnecessary objections, excessive interruptions, and/or obstructionist behavior should not be rewarded. • Properly phrased and rephrased questions and demonstrated a clear understanding of trial procedures. • Exposed contradictions in testimony and weakened the other side’s case. • Impeached the witness without appearing to harass or intimidate them. • Referred to witness testimony and followed rules for showing the testimony to the witness. • Demonstrated a clear understanding of the rules of competition and of evidence.

Evaluation Criteria

Witnesses
• Was believable in their characterizations and presented convincing testimony. • Was well prepared to answer the questions posed to them under direct examination and responded well to them. • Responded well to questions posed under cross-examination without unnecessarily disrupting or delaying court proceedings. • Understood the facts. • Consistently testified to key facts and avoided irrelevant comments. • Did not disrupt the trial with unreasonable inferences. • Played up the strengths of their statements and adequately explained the weaknesses. • Did not use notes. • Sounded spontaneous and not memorized. • Did not wear a costume or stage make-up and spoke in their normal voice.
Closing Arguments (x2) – Attorney
• The presentation contained elements of spontaneity and was not based entirely on a prepared text. • Incorporated examples from the actual trial, while also being careful not to introduce statements and evidence that were not brought out during the trial. • Outlined the strengths of their side’s witnesses and the weaknesses of the other side’s witnesses. • Asked for the verdict in their favor, including a request for relief, and explained why the verdict was justifiable. Made an organized and well-reasoned presentation summarizing the most important points for their team’s side of the case. • Effective rebuttal countered the opponent’s arguments. • Reviewed the exhibits and how they helped the case. • Stated the applicable law or statutes and how they supported their side’s theory. • Addressed the elements and the burden of proof.
Clerk
• Present and punctual for trial. • Performed their role so that there were no disruptions or delays in the presentation of the trial. • Conducted themselves professionally without attracting any unnecessary attention. • Handled time keeping responsibilities attentively and accurately. • Knowledgeable of all categories’ time limits. • Properly used verbal and visual time warnings.
Bailiff
• Present and punctual for trial. • Performed their role so that there were no disruptions or delays in the presentation of the trial. • Conducted themselves professionally, inspired confidence, and commanded respect, without attracting any unnecessary attention. • Knowledgeable about script and role in trial. • Followed script.
Team Participation and Presentation
• Students were courteous, observed general courtroom decorum, spoke clearly and distinctly, and displayed good sportsmanship/civility to all competitors, regardless of trial results. • Students were involved in the presentation of the case and actively participated in fulfilling their respective roles. • Witnesses performed in synchronization with attorneys in presenting their side of the case. • As much as possible, each trial attorney displayed examination and argumentation skills, and when appropriate, displayed knowledge of California Simplified Rules of Evidence in making objections. • Students demonstrated cooperation and teamwork, as well as following the set rules. • The teachers and attorney coaches displayed civility and good sportsmanship. • Students’ roles were evenly divided.

Guidelines for (1-10) Scoring

Attorneys	
9-10 – Excellent	
• Excellent understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues. • Questions and arguments advanced the case and didn't ask for answers that asked for unfair extrapolations. • Persuasive and articulate delivery made without the use of notes. • Thought well on their feet, were in control of the situation, and responded to the other team's presentation. • Objected when appropriate; clearly understood how to respond to objections. • Maintained eye contact with the judge and witnesses. • Did not verbally address the attorney scorers. • Spoke in a clear and audible voice.	
7-8 – Above Average	
• Good understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues. • Most questions and arguments advanced the case and didn't ask for unfair extrapolations. • Mostly persuasive and articulate delivery; used notes occasionally. • Able to think on their feet some of the time. • Most objections were appropriate; usually understood how to respond to objections. • Mostly maintained eye contact with the judge and witnesses. Did not verbally address the attorney scorers. • Mostly spoke in a clear and audible voice.	
5-6 – Average	
• Fair understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues. • Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury. • Used notes, sometimes stumbled on delivery. • Some questions and arguments advanced the case and didn't ask for unfair extrapolations. • Prepared for trial but often relied on preparation and not responding to the other team's presentation. • Missed appropriate opportunities to object; didn't always understand how to respond to objections. • Sometimes forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge and witnesses. • Sometimes difficult to hear.	
3-4 – Below Average	
• Demonstrated little understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues. • Needs work on poise and delivery; didn't respond to the other team's presentation. • Read mostly scripted questions; relied heavily on notes. • Few questions and arguments advanced case; may have asked questions that required unfair extrapolations. • Struggled to understand when to object and how to respond to objections; used objections to interfere with the other team's presentation. • Often forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge or witnesses. • Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury. • Often difficult to hear.	
1-2 – Far Below Average	
• Did not understand the case, rules, or legal issues. • Not persuasive or articulate in delivery; read entirely from script. • Not prepared for trial; not able to think on their feet. • Questions and arguments didn't advance the case; asked for answers that required unfair extrapolations. • Did not know when to object or how to respond to objections. • Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions. • Did not maintain eye contact with the judge or witnesses; unclear or inaudible voice. • Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury. • Unclear or inaudible voice.	

Witness
9-10 – Excellent
• Excellent understanding of the case, witness statements, and exhibits (if applicable). • Convincing, credible presentation. • Answers were thorough, accurate, persuasive, and natural, not scripted. • Didn't provide answers that embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials. • Maintained eye contact with the judge and student attorneys. • Did not verbally address the attorney scorers. • Spoke in a clear and audible voice.
7-8 – Above Average
• Good understanding of witness statements and exhibits (if applicable). • Mostly convincing, credible presentation. • Most answers were thorough, accurate, persuasive, and mostly natural, not memorized. • Rarely provided answers that embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials. • Sometimes forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge and student attorneys. • Did not verbally address the attorney scorers. • Mostly spoke in a clear and audible voice.
5-6 – Average
• Fair understanding of witness statements and exhibits (if applicable). • Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury. • Running of time of the opposing team's time. • Somewhat convincing, credible presentation. • Answers were not always thorough, accurate or persuasive; sounded scripted, not natural. • Some answers embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials. • Sometimes forgot to maintain eye contact with the judge and student attorneys. • Sometimes difficult to hear.
3-4 – Below Average
• Struggled to understand witness statements and exhibits (if applicable). • Presentation not convincing, credible; often unrealistic. • Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury. • Answers were generic and often didn't seem natural but based on memorized script. • Sometimes stumbled over responses. • Often provided answers that embellished facts and/or went outside the scope of case materials. • Often forgot to maintain eye contact with judge and student attorneys. • Often difficult to hear. • Deliberately use up opposing counsel's time.
1-2 – Far Below Average
• Did not understand witness statements and exhibits. • Presentation not convincing or credible; seems unrealistic. • Answers were not thorough, accurate, or persuasive, and didn't sound natural; stumbled over responses. • Answers not consistent with the facts and/or went outside scope of case materials. • Did not maintain eye contact with the judge or student attorneys. • Weak, inaudible, or unclear voice. • Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions. • Gave excessively long, non-responsive answers on cross-examination. • Deliberately use up opposing counsel's time. • Verbally addressed the scoring attorneys as if they were a jury.

Clerk
5 – Excellent
• Very professional demeanor. • Clear understanding of procedures; excellent timekeeping. • Clear, audible voice when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). • Visual warnings were clearly visible to student attorneys and judge. • Able to think well on feet and in control of the situation.
4 – Above Average
• Professional demeanor. • Good understanding of procedures; good timekeeping. • Mostly spoke in a clear, audible voice when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). • Visual warnings were mostly clearly visible to student attorneys and judge.
3 – Average
• Good demeanor. • Basic understanding of procedures; able to keep time. • Was heard when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). • Visual warnings were visible to student attorneys and judge.
2 – Below Average
• Demeanor lacked professionalism. • Demonstrated little understanding of procedures; timekeeping not entirely accurate. • Not clear or audible when issuing verbal warnings (if applicable). • Visual warnings may not have been visible to student attorneys and judge.
1 – Far Below Average
• Complete lack of professionalism. • No understanding of procedures; timekeeping was inaccurate. • Verbal warnings not used or completely inaudible (if applicable); visual warnings not used or not at all visible. • Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions.

Bailiff
5 – Excellent
• Very professional, believable presentation. • Consistent use of clear and audible voice, and eye contact; consistently natural delivery of script. • Excellent understanding of the role and procedures.
4 – Above Average
• Professional, believable presentation. • Used clear, audible voice, and eye contact a lot of the time. • Knew script and delivery were mostly consistently natural; good understanding of the role and procedures.
3 – Average
• Mostly natural, believable presentation. • Audible voice, some eye contact. • Apparent that the script was memorized; understood role and procedures.
2 – Below Average
• The presentation was not realistic and lacked professionalism. • Voice not all that clear or audible; little eye contact. • Used notes and stumbled with the script. • Did not have a good understanding of role and procedures.
1 – Far Below Average
• Complete lack of professionalism. • Voice not audible or clear; no eye contact. • Relied almost entirely on notes/script; did not understand role and procedures. • Disruptive/disrespectful/inappropriate actions.

Participation and Team Presentation	
9-10 – Excellent	
All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and other observers EXCELLED IN ALL of the following areas: • Showed courtesy and respect for students and participants, including their opponents and all courthouse staff, judges, attorney coaches, teachers and mock trial staff and volunteer personnel. • Showed dignity and restraint, irrespective of the outcome of any trial. Trials, contests, and activities were conducted honestly, fairly, and with civility. • Conformed to the highest standards of behavior. • Focused on the educational value of the Mock Trial Competition. • Used proper procedure and decorum. • Abided by the letter and the spirit of the competition's Rules and the Code of Ethical Conduct. • Did not employ tactics they believed to be wrong or in violation of the Rules. • Did not willfully violate the Rules of the competition in spirit or in practice. • Worked in sync and advanced a common theme. • Divided student roles evenly. • Presented naturally; no overacting.	
7-8 – Above Average	
All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and other observers: • Displayed strength in ALL of the above-listed areas, with no more than one inadvertent rule violation.	
5-6 – Average	
All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and other observers: • Displayed strength in ALMOST ALL of the above-listed areas, and there were only minor and inadvertent rule violation(s).	
3-4 – Below Average	
All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and other observers: • Fell short in one or more of the areas listed above, which could include engaging in multiple inadvertent, or one or more strategic rule violation(s).	
1-2 – Far Below Average	
All students, teachers, attorney coaches, and other observers: • Fell short in one or more of the areas listed above, which could include engaging in multiple serious or strategic rule violation(s).	
NOTE: Any specific point deduction without a designated category can be deducted in the participation and team presentation category.	

0 Score (10 Point Deductions)	• Failure to cross-examine a witness (attorney score). • Failure to conduct direct examination of a witness (attorney and witness score). • Can apply only to rule violations that specify a zero score.
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California Mock Trial Rules of Evidence

Summary of Allowable Evidentiary Objections

(Modified for San Diego County)

These are the only objections allowed and are modified for the mock trial competition.
(See Mock Trial Simplified Rules of Evidence of the case packet for more details.)

1. **Unfair Extrapolation:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question is an unfair extrapolation," or "This information is beyond the scope of the statement of facts."
2. **Relevance:** "Objection, Your Honor. This testimony is not relevant," or "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel's question calls for irrelevant testimony."
3. **More Prejudicial Than Probative:** "Objection, Your Honor. The probative value of this evidence is substantially outweighed by the danger of undue prejudice (or confusing the issues, wasting time, or misleading the trier of fact)."
4. **Foundation:** Objection, Your Honor. "There is a lack of foundation."
5. **Personal Knowledge/Speculation:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness has no personal knowledge to answer that question," or "Objection, Your Honor, speculation."
6. **Opinion Testimony (Testimony from Non-Experts):** "Objection, Your Honor. Improper lay witness opinion," or "Objection, Your Honor. The question calls for speculation on the part of the witness."
7. **Expert Opinion:** "Objection, Your Honor. There is a lack of foundation for this opinion testimony," or "Objection, Your Honor. Improper opinion."
8. **Character Evidence:** "Objection, Your Honor. Inadmissible character evidence," or "Objection, Your Honor. The question calls for inadmissible character evidence."
9. **Hearsay:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel's question calls for hearsay," or "Objection, Your Honor. This testimony is hearsay. I move that it be stricken from the record."
10. **Leading Question:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is leading the witness."
11. **Compound Question:** "Objection, Your Honor. This is a compound question."
12. **Narrative:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel's question calls for a narrative," or "Objection, Your Honor. The witness has lapsed into a narrative answer."
13. **Argumentative Question:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is being argumentative," or "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is badgering the witness."
14. **Asked and Answered:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question has been asked and answered."
15. **Vague and Ambiguous:** "Objection, Your Honor. This question is vague and ambiguous as to _____."
16. **Non-Responsive:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness is being non-responsive."
17. **Outside Scope of Cross-examination:** "Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is asking the witness about matters beyond the scope of cross-examination."
18. **Unreasonable Running of Time:** "Objection, Your Honor. The witness is unreasonably running time."