

**MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL
2019-20 COMPETITION RULES
Revised Rules (approved 10/04/19) - Condensed**

Rule 1.4 Student Timekeeper (NHSMTTC)

Rule 3.1 School and Student Eligibility

To participate in the competition schools must return a completed entry form and registration fee for each team entered. Registration fees will not be refunded after ~~October 25, 2019.~~ October 25, 2019. Registration forms and fees received after ~~October 25, 2019~~ October 25, 2019 will not be guaranteed trials in the competition.

Rule 3.2 Team Composition

Each team participating in a round ~~must is to~~ consist of ~~at least up to seven or~~ eight primary members: three witnesses, three attorneys, and either a student participating as a timekeeper and baliff or a timekeeper and a baliff. See Rule 4.1(A)4 for point deduction if a team has fewer than ~~In any given round of competition,~~ seven students ~~must to~~ participate (three attorneys, three witnesses, and a timekeeper/baliff). There is no limit to the total number of students who can be members of the team and a student need not participate in the same role in each round.

Once a student has participated in a scoring role on a team, that student cannot participate on another team in a scoring role for the remainder of the season rounds for which the team qualifies. ~~A student need not participate in the same scoring role in each round.~~

Teams should be advised that the team representing Minnesota at the National High School Mock Trial Championship must be comprised of a sufficient number of 9-12th grade students to comply with NHSMTTC Rules and that the its team roster cannot be altered after the Minnesota State Championship or during the National competition must comply with the requirements of Rule 5.9.

~~Refer to Section D: The Trial for more details on the student attorney roles.~~

~~Refer to Rule 4.5 for more details on the timekeeper's role.~~

Rule 3.4 Team Duties

The attorney who ~~will~~ examines a particular witness on direct examination is the only attorney person who may make the objections to the opposing attorney's questions ~~of that witness during the~~ cross-examination of that witness, and the attorney who will cross-examine a witness is the only one attorney permitted to make objections during the direct examination of that witness.

Rule 3.5 Team Roster

Copies of a Team Roster must be completed and duplicated by each team prior to arrival at the courtroom for each round of competition. Teams shall be identified by the side they are arguing and their school name. Before beginning a trial, the teams must exchange copies of their Team Roster. The roster should identify the gender of each witness so that references to such parties will be made in the proper gender. Copies of the Team Roster also should be given to the ~~judging panel and~~ presiding and scoring judge before each round. A sample roster format is included at the end of the case.

Rule 4.1 Courtroom Setting (2-5, Minnesota only)

3. All participants are expected to display proper courtroom behavior. The following rules should be observed in the courtroom at all times:

- c. Ask permission of the presiding judge to approach the judge or a witness unless otherwise instructed by the presiding judge.

Rule 4.1(A) Pretrial Matters (Minnesota only)

4. The starting time of any trial will not be delayed for longer than ten minutes, except with the agreement of the teacher coaches for both teams or as determined by ~~and~~ the presiding judge. Incomplete teams may proceed with the trial by having one or more members play up to two roles. ~~However, i~~ncomplete teams will be assigned a two (2) point deduction by each judge for each missing attorney, witness or timekeeper. Teams missing a bailiff will not be assigned a point deduction.

5. Once a trial has been scheduled, the trial will not be rescheduled due to the absence of a team member or illness, unless approved by the Mock Trial Director. Teams should include alternates to replace absent members. Cancellation and rescheduling of t~~Trials may be rescheduled~~ due to inclement weather conditions will be at the discretion of the Mock Trial Director (with particular attention to the distance teams may need to travel to reach their scheduled trial). While cancellation by a school of classes or after school activities will be considered by the Mock Trial Director, such cancellation does not prevent the assessment of a forfeit against the team not allowed by its school to participate.

The Mock Trial Director shall have broad discretion in the rescheduling of cancelled rounds, including the reallocation of scheduled opponents and the use, with the consent of the participating teams, of alternative venues for the trial.

Rule 4.9 Sequestration

Teams may not invoke the rule of sequestration. All witnesses are to be presumed to have been present during the trial and thus would have been present during testimony of all other witnesses.

Rule 4.11 Supplemental Material/Costuming/Exhibits

The only documents which the teams may present to the presiding ~~judge~~ or scoring ~~panel-judges~~ are the team roster forms and the individual exhibits as they are introduced into evidence. Exhibit notebooks are not to be provided. ~~to the presiding judge or scoring panel.~~

Rule 4.13 Scouting and Viewing of a Trials

Rule 4.18 Objections

Note: ~~Certain of the foregoing objections are not based on the Minnesota Mock Trial Competition Rules of Evidence and t~~Teams are not precluded from raising additional objections which may be available under such rules.~~the Minnesota Mock Trial Competition Rules of Evidence.~~

Rule 4.21 Standards of Judging and Use of Notes and Standards for Judging

Rule 4.23.1 Team Conference (Minnesota Only)

At the conclusion of final arguments, the presiding judge will allow time (approximately two minutes) for the three student attorneys, three witnesses, bailiff and timekeeper to confer. The purpose of this team conference is to give the team members the opportunity to select the students from the opposing team they believed performed as the best attorney and the best witness and a chance to discuss among themselves whether they believe any significant rules violations occurred during the trial of which the judges could not be aware.

After the allotted ~~two minutes~~time, the presiding judge will ask the teams to indicate their selection of best attorney and best witness. The presiding judge will then ask if either team wishes to report any significant rules violations. If a team feels point deductions should be assessed against the opposing team, one attorney from the team will have two minutes to explain why point deductions should be assessed. Following this explanation, one attorney from the opposing team will have two minutes to explain why point deductions should not be assessed. Further discussion will be limited to five minutes total, at which time the judges will decide individually about making any point deductions

on their score sheets. The amount of such point deductions, if any, is at the discretion of each individual judge. **These decisions (about point deductions) are final!**

Rule 5.5 Contest Format/Team Advancement (Minnesota only)

2. Sub-regionals: For mock trial purposes, the state will be divided into regions. The exact number of teams assigned to regions will be determined by the number of teams entered in the competition and travel distances to the site of the competitions. Teams from the same school shall be assigned to the same regions. Teams in Greater Minnesota (the "Outstate Teams") will be assigned to regions, subject to the discretion of the Mock Trial Director to establish a "Super" Outstate Region. Teams in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area (the "Metro Teams") will be assigned to compete at sub-regional competitions held either at the Hennepin County Courthouse (the "HCC Teams") or the Ramsey County Courthouse (the "RCC Teams" and collectively with the Super Outstate Regional teams and the HCC Teams, the "Super Region Teams") with teams from the same school to compete at the same courthouse. The MSBA will allocate the number of regional championships for the Metro Teams based on the relative number of HCC Teams and RCC Teams. Outstate Teams assigned to a Super Outstate Region will have two regional championships assigned to that Super Outstate Region.

Outstate-Non-Super Region Teams ranked first and second after the sub-regionals will compete in a regional championship round.

Metro-Super Region Teams will be paired to compete in a regional championship round with the number of HCC Teams and the number of RCC Teams to be selected being twice the number of regional champions allocated under Rule 5.5(2) to HCC Teams or RCC Teams, as applicable, and with the number of Super Outstate Regional teams being the first through fourth teams after the sub-regionals. Only the top two ranked teams from a single school will be considered for purposes of pairings for regional championships and to the extent two teams from the same school are ranked to compete in a regional championship, they shall be assigned to face each other. Other regional championship pairings will be power matched.

4. State Tournament:

After three rounds of competition, final championship trial participants will be the two teams that are 3-0 and will compete in the final championship round. If a team in the final championship round has not performed a side of the case in the first three rounds, it will be assigned that side in the championship round, if both teams can do so; if not, sides will be determined by coin flip in connection with the announcement of the final championship round teams using the protocol in Rule 5.5(5). Subject to the provisions of Rule 5.9 ~~the~~ the state champion is then eligible to represent Minnesota at the annual National High School Mock Trial Championship, which is held in a different city each year. ~~(2018 Reno, NV 2020 Evansville, IN). If the state champion is unable to attend the National High School Mock Trial Championship, the runner up is eligible to represent Minnesota.~~ Placement of the remaining fourteen teams competing in the state tournament will be based upon the following criteria: 1) Win/loss record, 2) Total number of ~~scoresheets~~ balls won, 3) Number of wins against 2-1 teams, 4) Number of wins against 1-2 teams, 5) Cumulative point differential. Provided that, if by application of the criteria a team is ranked higher than a team with the same win/loss record that defeated it, the losing team shall be placed immediately below the winning team.

Rule 5.8 Effect of Bye Round

A team that prevails by forfeit or receives a bye will be awarded a win and be credited with being deemed recipient of higher score on two scoresheets along with a cumulative point differential and cumulative points that equal the average (mean) cumulative point differential and average (mean) cumulative points of all regional rounds for the prior school year. A team that prevails by forfeit over another team from the same school will receive a cumulative point differential of zero and cumulative points of zero. [Note: for ~~2018-19, 2019-20~~, the cumulative point differential is ~~2219~~ and the cumulative points are ~~499209~~]

Rule 5.9 Representing Minnesota at the National High School Mock Trial Championship

NHSMTC Rule 3.1 requires teams competing at the National High School Mock Trial Championship to be comprised of students who participated on the current state championship team. If one or more participants on the team

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representing Minnesota at the National Championship is unable to compete, there may be opportunities' under the NHSMTC Rules for the addition of students to the team.

If the state championship team desires to represent Minnesota at the National Championship, the members of the team and its coaches shall meet with individuals selected by the Mock Trial Director and of the Chair of the Advisory Committee (the "Nationals Advisory Sub-Committee") within two weeks following the conclusion of the State Tournament to discuss the team's roster of participants (which must comply with NHSMTC Rule 3.1) and the expectations and obligations associated with representing the Minnesota High School Mock Trial program at the National Championship. Such expectations and obligations involve preparing to compete and gaining familiarity with the rules of competition and evidence used at the National Championship on an expedited basis. Each of the team members and coaches will be expected to sign written acknowledgments of their understanding of the obligations and that they are committed to perform those obligations to the best of their abilities.

If as a result of such meeting, the Nationals Advisory Sub-Committee concludes the state championship team may lack sufficient members who can attend the National Championship and make the necessary commitments, the Sub-Committee may recommend to the Advisory Committee to find the state championship team unable to compete and, in compliance with NHSMTC Rule 3.1, designate an alternate team from the state competition to represent Minnesota.

The Team representing Minnesota shall be prepared by mid-April to conduct at least three scrimmages within the team or with teams from surrounding states with members of the National Advisory Sub-Committee in attendance for the provision of recommendations and suggestions.

F. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Rule 6.1 **Reporting Alleging a Rules Violation/Following a Conclusion of a Trial** **(NHSMTC Only)**

Disputes which (a) involve students competing in a competition round and (b) occur within the bar, must be filed immediately following the conclusion of that trial round. Disputes in accordance with Rule 4.23.1, allegations of a violation of the rules must be brought to the attention of the presiding judge at the conclusion of the trial.

If any team believes that a substantial rules violation has occurred, one of its student attorneys must indicate that the team intends to file a dispute. The scoring panel will be excused from the courtroom, and the presiding judge will provide the student attorney with a dispute form, on which the student will record in writing the nature of the dispute. The student may communicate with counsel and/or student witnesses before lodging the notice of dispute or in preparing the form.

At no time in this process may team sponsors or coaches or other members of the team not participating in the round communicate or consult with the student participating in the round attorneys. Only student attorneys may invoke the dispute procedure.

Rule 6.2 Complaint/Grievance Process:

- Grievances must be in writing, specific, and filed be submitted within 48 hours of the time the grievant knows or reasonably should have known of the Misconduct.
- Grievances shall be responded to by the Mock Trial Director with involvement of members of the handled by the Rules Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee.
- The response to the grievance may involve: (i) provision of Rules Subcommittee will provide a copy of the grievance to relevant parties, (ii) invitation for submission of written responses; and (iii) and, in its sole discretion, undertake such additional investigation as its deemed appropriate. Any party may ask to appear before the Rules Subcommittee.
- The Rules Subcommittee may recommend that the Advisory Committee take any of the following actions, The disposition of the grievance in order of increasing severity includes:

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- a. Dismissal of the grievance as unsupported or not involving a violation.
 - b. ~~Decide~~ Determination that the grievance has merit, but does not warrant the taking of any ~~otherwise take no~~ action.
 - c. With the approval of the Advisory Committee, ~~i~~ssue a warning by private conversation with the offending parties.
 - d. With the approval of the Advisory Committee, ~~i~~ssue a reprimand by letter to the offending parties. In the discretion of the Chair of the Advisory Committee the letter may be sent to other individuals, schools, or employers.
 - e. With the approval of the Advisory Committee, ~~i~~ssue a suspension precluding individuals or teams from participation in mock trial for a specified time period.
 - f. With the approval of the Advisory Committee, ~~i~~ssue a disqualification precluding individuals or teams from participation in mock trial for no less than one competition season.
6. The grievance process shall not involve any ~~Rules Subcommittee may not recommend~~ changing of the outcome of any trial or the calling for a retrial. The judges' decision is final. See Rule 5.1.
8. ~~The Advisory Committee shall consider the Rules Subcommittee's recommendation and take such action, if any, as it sees appropriate, in its sole discretion. Any action is final and conclusive.~~ No legal or vested right is created by this process.