

SUPPLEMENTAL HANDBOOK:

This Supplemental Handbook is to be utilized in conjunction with the 2020-2021 Mock Trial Handbook. It is intended to address virtual tournament logistics and rule changes. Any rule not amended by this Supplemental Handbook remains as it exists in the 2020-2021 Mock Trial Handbook. At any point where differences exist between the 2020-2021 Mock Trial Handbook and this Supplemental Handbook, the Supplemental Handbook overrides the 2020-2021 Mock Trial Handbook.

Finally, while ordinarily rules are not amended during the Mock Trial season, and are only amended during the off-season, the Committee will entertain suggestions for rule changes to the virtual tournament format this year before regional competitions or before the semi-final competition, based upon the experience of the teams at scrimmages. The Committee strongly recommends that each team participate in at least one scrimmage round with another team prior to Regionals, so that the participants are able to practice utilizing the virtual platform.

A) **Platform:** Zoom will be the virtual platform for the 2021 Mock Trial Competition, both for the Regional Competition as well as the Semi-Final and Final Round Competitions. The State Bar will provide the platform for the tournament in order to accommodate each Regional and the Semi-Final and Final Round Competitions. The coordinators will utilize the breakout room feature on Zoom as a virtual courtroom.

B) **Set-Up:** The 2021 Mock Trial Competition will be run on a one-participant, one-device format during each student's presentation. For ease and equality in presentation, the participants may not choose to utilize less than one device per presenting student (i.e. by having a directing attorney and witness in one room and having the camera capture both via a wide-angle lens and microphones). Additionally, each separate device must be located in a separate room, to minimize feedback and echoes.

However, a school can, if the school's own pandemic policies permit, choose to use 3 devices per participating team – one for attorneys, one for witnesses, and one for a timekeeper. If the school utilizes this method, the three devices must be set up in different rooms to ensure minimal echo/feedback, and the students should take turns sitting at the designated device, so that the device always features the currently presenting (or objecting) student.

Similarly, if reliable internet connection is a concern, a school could choose to host each student on their own device within the school (or another location with reliable internet connection). If a school does choose this method of presentation, each device needs to be physically located in a separate room, to minimize feedback and echoes.

C) **Names of Participants:** Each participating member of a team should have their name visible on Zoom via the following format: Team Number-Individual Name-Character Name in that round (if applicable). The team number should simply be the number digits themselves (i.e. "939" versus "Team #939") so as to utilize the least amount of space possible. An example of how a witness name should be displayed is as follows: "624 - Emily Lonergan - Dorian Gray." Attorneys should identify as follows: "624 – Emily Lonergan – Attorney."

D) **Rounds:** Everyone in the round must mute their own audio prior to the start of each round, with the exception of those with speaking roles during that particular portion of the trial (this will be no greater than one attorney from each side of the case, one witness, and the presiding judge). We suggest that

everyone utilize “Speaker View,” rather than “Gallery View” on Zoom, however, students should be aware that, similar to an in-person round, their actions are always visible to the judges during the round.

Participants may not mute their video at any point during the round, except in the case of technological issues as described in Rule 1.3 (i.e. connection issues that require a participant to connect via phone only).

Observers and coaches must mute their video and audio.

E) **Exhibits:** Each participant and judge is expected to have all exhibits available and accessible during the trial. If the participating students wish to utilize the feature, they may, but are not required to, use the “screen-sharing” feature on Zoom to assist in presentation of exhibits. Alternatively, the student can simply direct the witness’s attention to a particular exhibit or affidavit, and the witness should have the exhibits available in front of them, either in hard copy or through the device, to refer to at the direction of the directing or crossing attorney.

F) **Chatroom feature:** The chatroom feature may not be utilized by anyone during the round, with the exception of timekeepers for each team, who will be utilizing the feature to communicate time used/time remaining.

G) **Regional Format:** Regional competitions will take place over a weekend, with two rounds occurring on Saturday and two rounds occurring on Sunday. Regional sizes will be no more than 8 teams per region. The regional winner of each region will advance to semi-finals (this provision is subject to change based upon registration and the number of regions – if it changes an announcement will be made over the list serv).

H) **IT Support:** Each team needs to designate a technological support individual who can assist with technological issues that could arise before or during trials. That individual can be a participating or non-participating student, coach, or outside support specialist, but should be someone who is familiar with zoom and can assist if the need arises during each trial. Each team’s IT Support specialist should be present during each trial, but should mute their audio unless called upon to assist and may also mute their video.

I) **Connection issues during trial:** The clock will stop for connection issues, at the request of any individual in a speaking position or any judge with the oversight of the presiding judge. The presiding judge has authority to call a recess at any point during the trial to address IT or connection issues, and the team’s IT Support individual has authority to unmute during any such recess to assist with any technological issues that arise during the course of the trial.

Competition Rule Amendments for the 2020-2021 Virtual Tournament:

Rule 1.3 – Emergencies: In addition to the rule as contained in the Handbook, the following provisions are added to this rule:

A Presiding Judge also has the ability to take a recess in the event that IT issues arise during the course of the trial with any of the participants or judges. If that occurs, each team’s IT Support specialist may unmute and communicate with any other individuals participating in the round, for the sole purpose of resolving technological issues.

If the technical difficulty cannot be resolved within a reasonable, but brief, amount of time, then the trial will continue with another member of the impacted team substituting for the impacted team member. The emergency substitute must be a member of the same team as the impacted participant.

Before making an emergency substitution, the impacted team must make the presiding judge aware, by stating words to the effect of, “Your honor, before I begin I would like to inform the court that I am [insert name] and I am substituting for [insert name], who is unable to compete due to technical difficulties.” Teams shall advise the Tournament Coordinator of any emergency substitution following the round of competition. The presentation will be scored based on the performance by the initial team member and the emergency substitute, taken as a whole.

Once the presiding judge determines either at the request of the team or sua sponte that a student is unable to compete in a role due to technical difficulties, to minimize disruption, the impacted student is not permitted to return and compete in the role for which a substitution was made. If the technical difficulty is resolved, the impacted participant may return and participate in his or her other roles, if any. For purposes of this rule, a witness examination consisting of direct, cross, any re-direct and any re-cross is one role, so that a participant who requires an emergency substitution for a witness examination may not return and participate until the entire witness examination is completed.

For purposes of this rule, technical difficulties include internet failure and computer, device or microphone failure; failure of a camera only does not permit emergency substitution under this rule. Students who lose internet connection shall rejoin the trial using a telephonic connection, if possible.

In the event of a loss of connection for a timekeeper, that team shall defer to its opponent’s timekeeper for that trial segment. The team whose timekeeper lost connection may substitute another participating student in the round as timekeeper for the remaining trial segments.

In the event that a technical emergency prevents an entire team from completing in part or all of a round, the presiding judge shall declare a recess of up to 15 minutes, to allow that team to reconnect, either via video or by connecting on audio-only via telephone. If reconnection is impossible, a forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team that maintains its connection.

If at least five witnesses have been subject to cross-examination, the Tournament Coordinator or its designee may in its sole discretion complete the ballot, assigning scores equal to their average score on all segments that could not be completed by the disconnected team and a “10” to the team that remained connected. No student or team may feign technical difficulty or invoke the technical difficulty rule for purposes other than a genuine technical difficulty.

Rule 1.6 – Drop Deadline: The final paragraph of this rule is replaced with the following:

If a team feels it is not safe to compete due to a COVID-19-related emergency (i.e. students become ill, or students would have been hosted in the school due to connectivity issues, but it is no longer safe to do so due to COVID-19 exposure), the team should contact the State Coordinator with as much advance notice as possible. The regional tournament will not be rescheduled, but, if the Committee agrees that a COVID-19-related emergency exists, the Committee will not place a forfeiting team on probation the following year.

Rule 3.4 – Team Composition: The following sentence is added to the last paragraph:

The only exception to this rule would relate to COVID-19-related emergencies (i.e. a student suddenly unable to participate due to COVID-19). Utilizing the virtual tournament should minimize this issue as much as possible, however, the Committee recognizes that there may still be occurrences of unexpected virus-related emergencies that would limit a student's ability to participate even in a virtual tournament. If this occurs, the team's coach should contact Katie Wilcox as soon as possible.

Rule 3.6 – Team Duties: The following statement is added as a preface to the first sentence of the rule: "Except as provided in an emergency under Rule 1.3,"

Rule 3.7 – Team Roster Form: There is no need to provide hard copies of team roster forms to the participating judges during the rounds, but participating students should have an electronic copy of the roster available to provide, either via screen sharing or via email, to the judges at the request of any of the judges.

Rule 4.1 – Courtroom Setting: Only the middle paragraph of this rule is applicable to this year's virtual competition, and that paragraph is amended to indicate that Teams should be in their assigned breakout rooms no later than 10 minutes prior to the starting time of each trial. Additionally, presiding judges may consider technological difficulties by the judge in determining whether to declare a forfeit.

Rule 4.4 – Swearing of Witnesses: All witnesses are deemed to have been pre-sworn prior to the start of the trial.

Rule 4.6 – Timekeeping: The statement regarding timekeepers being encouraged to sit next to one another is not applicable. Additionally, the paragraph starting with "Objections" is amended as follows:

Objections, questioning from the judge, administering the oath, technical difficulties at the discretion of the presiding judge (sua sponte or at the request of a participant), and a witness's review of his/her own affidavit during cross-examination, are not counted as part of the 40-minute time allotment.

This paragraph is inserted just prior to the "NOTE" in the rule:

Each timekeeper must utilize the "Chat" feature of Zoom to communicate time used/remaining by each team at a minimum at the conclusion of each witness, and at any other point wherein a time check is requested by either team or by the Presiding Judge. In this fashion, should a timekeeper lose connectivity and a school needs to have another student step into the role for the remaining segments of the trial, there is a clear indication of time used/remaining at that point in the trial. As indicated in Rule 1.3, a team whose timekeeper who loses connectivity during a segment shall defer to the opposing team's timekeeper for that particular trial segment.

In addition to using the "Chat" feature as indicated above, timekeepers are also permitted to utilize the "Chat" feature at other times (such as during a closing argument) to provide warnings to their teammates of time remaining, or timekeepers may utilize timecards and display time remaining to their teammates through the video on their screen.

Rule 4.11 – Supplemental Material/Costuming

Hard copies of the exhibits need not be utilized during the competition. All teams are permitted to use the "screen sharing" function of Zoom to display exhibits.

Rule 4.12 – Trial Communication – The following sentence is added to the first paragraph: “Observers and coaches must mute their audio and video during each round.”

During a recess taken for technological difficulties, each team’s IT Support Specialist may unmute and communicate with members of the team for the purpose of resolving technological issues, but may not communicate anything substantive with respect to the trial.

The “Chat” feature on Zoom may only be utilized by the timekeepers in the round or by a participating student having technological issues who is unable to communicate in any other fashion, for purposes of communicating those technological issues (i.e. – an attorney could indicate “I cannot hear anyone – can anyone hear me?”). The “Chat” feature may not be utilized at all by coaches or observers during a round, unless such coach or observer is the team’s designated IT Support Specialist, in which case that individual may utilize it if necessary during an IT-related recess.

Rule 4.13 – Viewing a Trial

At this time, spectators/observers outside of the team members and coaches themselves will not be permitted to view or observe the virtual trials by utilizing Zoom. This decision will be revisited closer to the time of competition, if it is determined that observers are able to watch without interfering with the proceedings at all. If observers are permitted, the observers will be required to mute their video and audio feeds, and may not utilize the chat feature at all. Observers are also not permitted to identify their schools, including via the presented name on the screen. Any observer not following this rule will be disconnected from the trial and not permitted to reconnect; it is the responsibility of each participant to communicate this rule to their respective observers.

Observers are able to view the trial by being located in the same room as the participants and listening in, however, observers are only able to listen to the trial in this fashion if the observers are not making noise, being disruptive, or communicating with the participant.

Rule 4.14 – Videotaping/Photography

The following statement is added to the rule: No team may utilize the “record” option on Zoom for regionals or semi-final competition.

Rule 4.15 – Jury Trial

The final statement should be amended to read “In 2021, the case will be tried to a jury.”

Rule 4.16 – Standing during Trial

This rule is replaced with the following: In the virtual competition, participants are able to stand or remain seated during all segments of the trial, but must ensure that the participant’s face is visible in the camera at all times during the presentation, and that the device’s microphone is not blocked or impeded.

Rule 4.21 – Procedure for Introduction of Exhibits

This procedure remains the same for the virtual tournament, except that all exhibits are presumed to have been shown to opposing counsel, and all participants are presumed to have access to all exhibits and affidavits in the case. All witnesses and attorneys must have the ability to access all exhibits and

affidavits during their testimony, whether in hard copy format or electronically. The presenting attorney may either direct the witness's attention to the pre-marked exhibit, or may show the exhibit utilizing the screen-sharing function on Zoom.

Rule 4.22 – Use of Notes

The last statement is replaced with the following: Attorneys may consult with each other and participating witnesses with the assistance of electronic devices. No participants may consult or communicate, electronically or otherwise, with anyone other than the participating student members of their team (i.e. the three attorneys and three witnesses) during the course of the trial.

Rule 4.25 – The Critique

There will be no score sheet runners, however judges will complete score sheets and provide them electronically in the manner as directed by the regional or semi-final tournament coordinator.

Rule 4.26 – Restrictions on Use of Electronics During the Round and Tournament

Due to the inability of teammates to communicate with one another at counsel table or by notes, as they would at an in-person competition, students are permitted to use electronic devices or chat rooms other than the Zoom chat room feature available in the trial for purposes of communicating with one another during the course of the trial. All other provisions of Rule 4.26 as it exists in the Handbook remain in tact.

Rule 5.6 – Power-Matching/Seeding

All regional competitions this year will consist of 8 or fewer teams; as a result, the first two rounds will be randomly paired, and the third and fourth rounds will be power-matched.

The remainder of the Handbook, as applicable to students, consists primarily of suggestions/guidelines for students and coaches. Many of those suggestions/guidelines are still applicable in the virtual tournament, however, students and coaches should do their best to adapt to the different style of presentation and tournament this year. The Mock Trial Committee recognizes that the 2020-2021 Mock Trial Season and virtual tournaments may not run smoothly and likely will not be perfect, but we feel it is better to hold an imperfect tournament versus not holding a tournament at all. We would ask all teachers and students alike to be patient with each other, your judges, and your coordinators as everyone works together to hold a very different tournament this year!