



### Guidelines/Helpful Information for Teams

1. Teams consist of 7-10 high school students--from any grade; all team members must be enrolled in the same school or homeschool area.
2. Team members must meet T.E.A. requirements for eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.
3. Teams will first compete at the regional competition level based on the T.E.A. Education Service Center regions (Regions 1-20); regional coordinators will be responsible for informing registered teams about the date, location and any additional fees in competing at the regional level. Teams can figure out what region they are in by going to the "District Locator" tab on the Texas Education Agency's website--  
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us>
4. The fact situation, rules, and informational materials (i.e. the "case packet") developed by the Texas High School Mock Trial Program will be used throughout the state and at each level of the competition.
5. Teams interested in participating in the program will need to complete a registration form online and submit the required fee in order to participate (and receive a copy of the case packet materials). Teams register at: <http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/>
6. Teams are encouraged to enlist assistance from an attorney in preparing for the mock trial process.
7. New teams might be interested in purchasing additional helpful materials in preparation for competition – New Sponsor Handbooks, DVDs of past competitions, prior case packets, etc. Materials available for purchase at: <http://www.texashighschoolmocktrial.com/>
8. Attorneys and judges will be responsible for judging teams in the competition.
9. All case materials and criteria for judging are included in the case packet materials.
10. At the state level tournament, if the number of qualifying teams equals an uneven number, the state coordinator will draw one wild card team (from all regions that have more than two teams competing) and that wild card team will be notified and have the opportunity to advance to state.
11. Opposing school teams will be randomly paired in the first round of the competition then go to the power match system after. *Anyone wanting to learn more about the power match system should inquire with the State Coordinator.*
12. The state championship team will advance to the National High School Mock Trial Championship in May.



## Summary of Rules of Competition

*The following summarizes selected Rules of the Competition and procedures:*

- 1. Team Composition:** Each school may enter one team in its regional competition to qualify to advance to the State Finals. Teams consist of a minimum of seven and a maximum of ten members. No alternates are allowed. Roles team members present in each trial are at the discretion of the team advisors.
- 2. The Problem:** The mock trial problem material contains stipulations, relevant documents and six (three per side) witness statements. A witness is required to testify only to that information contained in his/her witness statement and is not permitted to testify to facts or conclusions which are inconsistent with or cannot be reasonably inferred by his/her own statement.
- 3. Trial Presentation:** All trials are governed by the Rules of the Competition and the Texas High School Mock Trial Rules of Evidence only. Teams must prepare to present both sides of the case.

There are eight (8) attorney tasks to be divided evenly among the team's three attorneys. The eight tasks are opening statement (1); direct examination of own witnesses (2), (3), (4); cross-examination of opponent's witnesses (5), (6), (7); and, the closing argument (8). Thus, one attorney presents the opening statement and conducts one direct examination and one cross-examination. Another attorney conducts one direct examination, one cross-examination and presents the closing argument. **One attorney conducts one direct examination and one cross-examination only.** Attorneys are limited to calling their own witnesses and may not re-call any witness; objections during examination should be made by the attorney responsible for that witness; e.g., the attorney who handled direct examination of the witness is to be the attorney who makes objections during the cross-examination; the attorney who will cross examine the witness may object during direct examination.

Attorneys will stand during opening and closing statements and usually will be seated at the counsel table during witness examination. Attorneys will stand when making and responding to objections. Team attorneys may ask the judge for permission to approach the bench or witness at appropriate times during the trial. Attorneys may use notes in presenting their cases (witnesses **may not** use notes while on the witness stand).

Attorneys may cite only the materials contained in the case packet, and they may introduce into evidence **only** those documents given in the packet. In addition, students may not use, even for demonstrative purposes, any materials which are not provided in the competition packet. Props, costumes nor enlargements are permitted. During the trial, coaches and all other observers may not talk to, signal, or otherwise communicate with or coach their teams. This includes breaks, if any should occur, in the trial.
- 4. Time Limits:** Each trial requires approximately 110 minutes to present the case. Trial sequence is in blocks of time with teams having the discretion of how much time will be used for each witness, etc. The blocks of time listed in the case packet are the maximum times allowed per segment. Times not used in one segment may not be applied to any other segment. **One of the official team members is to serve as timekeeper.**
- 5. Judging:** Judges may announce a "hypothetical" verdict on the merits of the case; however, it is the **presentation decision** that determines the winner of the trial. The judges' decision is final.

*For a complete listing of the Rules of the Competition and the Federal Rules of Evidence (Mock Trial Version), please refer to the official case packet of the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition.*