

Scoring Panelists

- Please review the volunteer brief and case materials before the tournament

Pre-Trial

- Conflicts of interest – you may know a coach, student, etc. If you feel uncomfortable scoring a team, OR if a team is uncomfortable with you scoring them, you may need to switch panels. BUT remember a true conflict is one that would create bias or would appear to create a bias based on the perceptions of a reasonable person. Simply knowing another attorney, etc. is not a conflict.
- Seating – please sit in the Jury Box – in BACK ROW. Timekeepers sit in front of you so as not to see score sheets
 - o Timekeepers – should sit in front of panelists in front row of jury box; official timekeepers of the trial (not coaches in gallery); should not coach team from seat – grounds for disqualification.
 - o Courtroom journalists and artists should sit in the front row of the jury box with the timekeepers (state only/practice at regionals)

Scoring

- The MT Committee emphasizes to all Mock Trial Teams that students are expected to present their case to you in the same manner as an actual attorney would. In other words, the students are expected to: have a cogent case strategy present facts and witnesses in a concise, understandable and logical manner and make arguments using only facts that were presented at trial.
- Scores demonstrate skill and talent – NOT the merits of the facts and law of the case as written.
 - o While we ask that you evaluate the student's performance and presentation as if they are real attorneys, we also ask that you not judge any student or team based on the merits of the case. In other words, we ask that you not give one team higher points simply because you believe that, if this was an actual trial, a team would win the trial based solely on the strength of the facts and law of the case, and not on the skills of the students.
 - o Higher scores should reflect skill; talent; knowledge of the case, the law, and procedure; extemporaneous response to the opposing side; trying the case without the benefit of notes; effective advocacy, persuasiveness, and energy, passion, and characterization.
 - o Panelists should not adjust their score (in either direction) in the event they score a round where a female student is playing the defendant as a male or as a female. All roles are designed to be gender neutral.
- We have added a second score for witnesses. So, you will be scoring each teams' opening and closing statements, each teams' 3 attorney performances in direct and cross, each teams' 3 witness performances in direct and cross, professionalism score
- All scores will be between 1 and 10
 - o Scores shouldn't be excessively harsh or lenient – we recommend trying to keep all scores above a 5
 - o Scores need to be consistent – but all 10's or 4's are not helpful.

- Walk through the scoresheet and what it looks like – mention that they need to identify which witness is being called/scored on just to ensure accuracy on back end and correct students get credit for correct performances
- Additional scoring tips:
 - o Witnesses should not use any notes
 - o Use of notes for attorneys is not prohibited if using to quote or as a reminder. Students may be penalized if using as a crutch during opening, closing or examinations. They are allowed to pass notes between attorneys during the trial
 - o Teams are not allowed to raise objections during opening statements or closing arguments. Teams are allowed to object after the opening or closing.
 - o We encourage Mock Trial Teams to make objections during trial only to violations of the rules of procedure or the rules of evidence. If a team believes that a violation of the MT Rules of Competition has occurred, the team may object in court and the judge may rule. In addition, the MT Committee has provided teams with a procedure to file written objections at the end of trial. IN ANY EVENT, your scores should not take into effect whether or not there were any MT rule violations, as that determination will be made by the presiding judge, the Tournament Coordinator and the MT Committee. Any sanction is reserved to the Tournament Coordinator and the MT Committee.
 - o DO NOT REWARD, BUT PENALIZE, RUDE AND CONTENTIOUS BEHAVIOR OF STUDENT ATTORNEYS AND OR WITNESSES during cross examination! We are not teaching students to be combative! Note the tone of voice, attitude, demeanor, their frustration, and similar issues.
 - o Please do not adjust score based on a student's accent or clothing
 - o Please do not adjust scores based on enlargements of exhibits and don't reward one team for having them when the other doesn't
 - o Please refer to the printed scoring criteria handout for further detail on scoring

Post-Trial

- Score sheet submission
 - o We are using virtual scoresheets – that is why we asked you to bring computers or cell phones
 - § You are welcome to use a physical scoresheet/notes during the trial then enter scores at the end if you prefer (please write it down in case of tech issues)
 - o You can access the scoresheet by scanning the QR code or typing the web address into your browser. Both the QR code and the web address are included on the physical scoresheet that you have been provided with.
 - o Once the trial ends, you can transfer your scores from the physical scoresheet to the virtual form. If you need help with this step, please ask your courtroom monitor to help you. Try to do this efficiently as after chats cannot start until all scoresheets are submitted.
 - o Teams cannot tie. Please go back and adjust some scores so that only 1 team wins. If you try to submit a tied score, the form will give you an error message.

- o Please give your physical scoresheet to the courtroom monitors at the end of the round so that they can dispose of them – we don't want students to find these!
 - o Following the trial, all scoring panelists must submit their digital scoresheets by clicking the submit button before any after chats begin
- After chats
 - o The courtroom monitors will notify the judge when all of the scoresheets have been submitted. At that time, you will have the opportunity to give students feedback on their performance.
 - o Please limit your feedback to 3 minutes. No war-stories please – fun to tell but generally not conducive to education.
 - o Do not reveal your scores!
 - o Should focus on PERFORMANCE and NOT THE MERITS or strategy of their case!
 - o Be kind but honest – offer comments about what you liked about their performance – this is educational
 - o REMEMBER – students are from variety of backgrounds – ethnic, socio-economic, religious, etc. Be mindful of this with comments.
 - o Important, many of the schools cannot afford new clothes for this tournament and have borrowed clothes; DO NOT COMMENT ON A STUDENTS CLOTHES OR ACCENTS