



MSBA High School Mock Trial Program Information

Mock Trial teams are made up of 8-14 kids. (Most schools have 10 kids/team.) The case materials are released online this year in mid-October. The registration deadline is in mid-October and the fee is \$200/team. Each year we host training sessions for teams and coaches. A live training will be held in October in Minneapolis. Other training sessions will be held in October in New Ulm and Brainerd. At this training we give some general guidelines to help teams start to prepare their arguments and also some more case-specific prep information. The PowerPoints made in conjunction with these presentations are later placed online for teams to utilize.

What's the timeline of the program?

From late October until mid-January, teams work to prepare their arguments for the competition. Before the actual competition starts, schools host invitational tournaments to gain extra practice. Participation in invitational tournaments is entirely voluntary and has no bearing on the competition. Each team is guaranteed two trials in the tournament. Trials in greater Minnesota are held during the regular business day. Trials in the metropolitan area are held during the evening hours. After the first two rounds of competition, the field of teams is cut in half and then the remaining teams compete in a single-elimination tournament in hopes of becoming Regional Champions and representing their region at the State Mock Trial Tournament. The winner of the state tournament represents MN at the National High School Mock Trial Championship (this year to be held in Atlanta, GA).

How do I get started?

After securing support and funding from your school district, the next biggest hurdle is getting the students to commit to being on the team. Mock trial is truly a team sport. The participation and dedication of ALL team members is absolutely essential. Students who are committed to the team find the experience very valuable. Along with the unique inside look at the legal system, mock trials help student hone these skills: precise, quick analytical thinking; teamwork; reasoning and listening; public speaking.

Where can more information be found?

Our website is really the main hub of information for teams that are interested and who are already participating in the competition. At the website (<http://www2.mnbar.org/mocktrial/index.htm>) you will find information about all things mock trial. You might be certain to look under the "Resources" link. Four documents would be particularly useful to a newcomer. (They're the teacher coach, attorney coach and the two student participant documents.) These documents should give you a better grasp of what exactly is involved and help your students decide if they are interested in participating. There is also an ABA publication there: "Putting on Mock Trials" which might give your students a little more information about the mock trial process.

If you have any specific questions, please feel free to contact Emily R. Reilly, Mock Trial Manager at ereilly@mnbar.org or 800.882.6722. If you're also interested in talking with a more experienced coach about starting a program, I'd be happy to put you in touch with someone.