

## 2008 Mock Trial Rules Updates

The following language in *italics* are rule changes for the 2008 season and are in effect until further notice.

### Rule 1.1 Rules

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*Rules with the "NHSMTC" designation appear in these rules only as notification to the team representing Minnesota at the National High School Mock Trial Championship (NHSMTC) that additional and different rules govern that tournament. (See Rule 1.3 for an example.) This designation does not imply that rules governing the NHSMTC govern this, the Minnesota Mock Trial Tournament, in any way.*

### Rule 3.2 Team Composition

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A team can also select an entirely new member after the first round of trials, even if this person was not officially listed as an alternate on the team roster. This person could serve in any capacity during Round 2 or thereafter. Team rosters cannot be altered after the second round of competition, *except when a student added to a roster has not competed in any round, on any team as a lawyer and/or a witness in the current season.*

### Rule 3.4 Team Duties

Team members are to evenly divide their duties. *There shall be three attorneys and three witnesses. Each of the three attorneys will conduct one direct examination and one cross-examination; one of the three attorneys will present the opening statement and another will present the closing argument and rebuttal. [See Rule 4.5]*

### Rule 4.6 Timekeeping

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Time does not stop for introductions of exhibits. *If at any point during the trial time expires any timekeeper should say "stop" aloud for the court and parties to hear at the point of time expiration.*

### Rule 5.2 Composition of Judging Panels (Minnesota Regional trials only. See Rule 5.5(4) for State Finals' judging panel information.)

Every effort is made to have two volunteer judges evaluating each trial at the regional level. One is the presiding judge, whose role is to both conduct the trial and to evaluate the teams' performances. The other judge's responsibility is solely that of an evaluator. Both judges have been instructed to rate the performance of all witnesses and attorneys on the team. In the event only one lawyer is able to judge a trial, the one score will be doubled for purposes of calculating the point differential score. If there are three judges during a regional trial, the evaluating and presiding will be handled similar to the state finals: one judge will be the presiding judge; the other two will be the evaluating judges. The scoring judges' evaluation will determine the trial winner. *In the event of a tie, the team awarded the tie-breaker point on the presiding judge's scoresheet shall be the winner.*

### Rule 5.5 Contest Format/Team Advancement (Minnesota only)

3. Regionals: After all teams in a region have argued two times, teams will be ranked based first upon win-loss record and second upon the cumulative point differential scores. [**Note:** a team's point differential score is the total point spread between that team's score and its opponent's score in a given trial. For example, if Team A scores 95 points in a trial and its opponent, Team B, scores 92 points, then Team A will have an adjusted score of plus 3 and Team B will have an adjusted score minus 3.] *Teams ranked one thru eight*

after two rounds of competition will advance into Round 3. If a region consists of an odd number of teams which is fewer than 8 total teams after two rounds of competition, the highest ranked team remaining in that region will receive a bye for Round 3 and advance into Round 4.

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b. Sides for Round 3, 4 and 5 will be assigned in advance. Teams with a 1-1 record will be assigned the side on which they lost in Round 1; if this would result in the same pairing/sides as a trial in Round 1 or 2, the teams will switch sides (so, if it was Liberty Blue v. City Green in Round 2, the power-matching would result in the exact same pairing in Round 3, the teams would switch sides.) To the greatest extent possible, teams will switch sides in subsequent rounds if both teams can do so; otherwise, the first team alphabetically will present the defense side of the case.

4. **State Finals:** Each regional champion is eligible to attend the state competition. If the first place team from a region decides it does not want to attend the state tournament, the second place team will be eligible to compete. The state tournament format differs from that of the regional competition. All teams at the State Competition will participate in at least three rounds of trials and will present each side of the case at least once.

There will be two scoring judges and a presiding judge at each trial. State Finals Power-matching criteria for the first three rounds are: 1) Win/loss record, 2) total number of ballots won, 3) cumulative point differential. A team can earn up to three ballots/trial. Ballots are cast by each of the three judges. Scoring judges cast their ballots via the point totals on their scoresheets. Presiding judges cast their ballot using the Presiding Judge Performance Rating Sheet. If there is a tie in the number of ballots cast by the scoring judges, the Presiding Judge's Performance Rating Sheet shall determine the winner of the trial.

Pairings for the first round will be assigned at random. After round one of the competition, teams will be divided into two brackets (1-0 and 0-1). Teams will be ranked within the brackets and power-matched. After round two of the competition, teams will be divided into three brackets (2-0, 0-2 and 1-1). Teams will be ranked within the brackets and power-matched. After three rounds of competition, final championship trial participants will be determined using this criteria: 1) Win/loss record, 2) Total number of ballots 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) The top two ranked teams will compete in the final championship round. Side-assignments will be determined by a coin-flip after the final championship round teams are announced. 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 (2008 Wilmington, DE; 2009 Atlanta, GA).

#### **Rule 5.8 Effect of Bye Round**

In the event of a bye, the team receiving a bye for any round, for any reason will be awarded a win and a point differential of zero for the round in which the team is given a bye.