

POWER PAIRING MEMORANDUM

(Revised March 23, 2017)

What is Power Pairing? Power Pairing describes the process, adopted by the Steering Committee, by which the Tournament Administrator(a)s determine which schools your school will be paired against during the preliminary and elimination rounds of the Santa Clara County Mock Trial Tournament. The goal of power pairing is to help ensure that your school is matched against schools that have a comparable win-loss record during each of the preliminary rounds. Not only does power pairing serve an educational purpose, it also helps ensure that the eight strongest teams advance to the elimination rounds, and that the two strongest teams advance to the final round. It also minimizes the discretion afforded to the Tournament Administrator(s) to determine pairings. The purpose of this memorandum is to enhance transparency in the administration of the tournament and to guide future Tournament Administrator(s).

Preliminary Rounds: The first preliminary round match-ups will be completely random except that the Tournament Administrator(s) have the discretion to adjust side assignments to facilitate power pairing in subsequent rounds. Beginning in Round Two, schools will face other schools with similar win-loss records and will be divided into separate brackets (e.g., the 1-0 bracket and the 0-1 bracket). All schools with comparable win-loss records will be seeded based upon their cumulative average percentage scores. For seeding purposes, the cumulative average percentage scores will be capped at 54% and 46%. The top seed in each bracket will face the bottom seed, the second highest seed will face the second lowest seed, etc. If necessary, and subject to side constraints, a bracket may be adjusted to include higher seeded teams in the next lowest bracket. If a bracket is expanded, the higher seeded teams from the lower bracket will become the lower seeded teams in the upper bracket. Normal power pairing principals will then apply.

Tournament Administrator(s) will adjust sides so that a team's prosecution and defense will each perform twice during the preliminary rounds. Teams will also not face the same school twice during preliminary rounds. To accomplish this, teams will flip sides after Round One. However, if required by power pairing, some teams may not flip sides after Round Two. To ensure that teams will not face the same school twice and to ensure that each school has the opportunity for its defense and prosecution team to each perform twice during the preliminary rounds, Tournament Administrator(s) may adjust the teams' standings within the win-loss brackets for pairing purposes.

Schools should read their notices very carefully to make sure which side will perform on which night. Schools may not request the Tournament Administrator to assign their school to a particular side on a particular night.

In Round Four, the Tournament Administrator(s) will endeavor to pair a team with a 2-1 record against another team with a 2-1 record to maximize the probability that the winner of that round

will advance to quarter-finals. To accomplish that, a high-ranking 3-0 team may be paired against a 1-2 team in Round Four.

Elimination Rounds: The eight teams with the highest win-loss record from the four preliminary rounds will advance to the quarter-final round. The cumulative average percentage scores will serve as a tie-breaker. For example, if there are two 4-0 teams, five 3-1 teams, and six 2-2 teams, then all of the 4-0 and 3-1 teams and the 2-2 team with the highest cumulative average percentage score will advance to the quarter-final round.

The eight quarter-finalists will then be seeded based upon the results of the four preliminary rounds. In the example above, the 4-0 team with the highest cumulative average percentage score would be the number one seed. The 2-2 team would be the number eight seed. In the quarter-final round, the highest seed will face the lowest seed, the second highest seed will face the second lowest seed, and so forth.

If teams which are paired against each other in any elimination round have previously faced each other in a preliminary round, the Tournament Administrator(s) will endeavor to switch sides for the elimination round. If they have not faced each other before, the Tournament Administrator(s) will assign sides in quarter-finals and semi-finals randomly; however, to the extent possible, teams will flip sides after quarter-final round. If the two finalist teams have not met before during the course of the tournament, sides will be determined by stipulation. If no stipulation is reached, sides will be determined by coin flip.

Teams are not re-seeded after the quarter-final rounds. The highest surviving seed will be paired against the lowest surviving seed. For example, if the number eight seed defeats the number one seed, and the number two seed defeats the number seven seed, then the number two seed and the number eight seed will face each other in semi-finals.

Practice Teams: If there are an uneven number of teams competing in the county tournament, a “practice team” will be chosen and will compete against a lower seeded team in a lower bracket, so that the results of the practice team’s round will not skew the results of teams which may still be viable for the elimination rounds. The practice team does not get credit for a win or loss but the result will affect the other team’s record. If a practice team is necessary, the Tournament Administrator(s) will afford all participating schools the opportunity to offer a practice team and will select the practice teams based on a random, rotating, and fair basis.

The Steering Committee believes the power pairing system described above, which loosely mirrors the system used by CRF at states, is the fairest and most effective way to ensure that the best team is chosen to represent Santa Clara County at states, while maximizing the education opportunities for all students involved. Any perceived errors by the Tournament

Administrator(s) in applying power pairing principles in making assignments should be immediately brought to the attention of the Tournament Administrator(s) so that corrective action before the next round can be made if necessary and appropriate.