

SANTA CLARA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL **VIRTUAL TOURNAMENT RULES**

The Santa Clara County High School Mock Trial Steering Committee adopts the following rules that will govern the annual high school mock trial tournament until further notice. These rules supersede the CRF rules to the extent they are inconsistent. Other Santa Clara County rules are set forth in the Santa Clara County Modifications to the CRF Team Rulebook.

FORMAT

1.1 All trials shall be via audio video remote utilizing Zoom 5.0 or better utilizing the break-out room format. Due to shelter in place directives, participants must create their own virtual courtroom from their own home or separate location. See § 3.0. Participants shall not gather in one location or any location with more than one participant present unless the participants reside in the same house.

1.2 Due to technology constraints, other than teachers and coaches, spectators cannot separately attend.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Each participant is required to have the following:

- a. Secure and stable internet connection
- b. Laptop or computer with a video camera (cell phones are not recommended but are not prohibited)
- c. Quiet location with a neutral background
- e. Use Zoom 5.0 or better. For those participants who cannot upgrade to Zoom 5.0 or better, the Tournament Administrators will have moderators who will move those participants to the appropriate break-out room/trial department.

2.2 Headphones. Headphones or other earpieces are not recommended but are not prohibited. Other than the 30-second consultations following pretrial and trial, participants may not communicate with coaches during the trials. See § 3.5(D).

PROCEDURE

3.1 Courtrooms. Prior to each round, the Tournament Administrators will email the link and password for the Zoom meeting for each round. Participants will be invited into the main room until the trial commences. At the appropriate time, participants will be invited to go to the appropriate break out room for the trial. Break-out rooms may be identified by number or assigned schools. The scoring attorneys and presider will be placed into the room once the trial is ready to commence.

3.2 Identification. Prior to entering the main room, each participant will rename themselves by side (“P” or “D”), role (attorney, witness, or clerk/bailiff) and the student’s name. For example, Mary Adams, a prosecution attorney, shall rename herself as “P-Attorney Mary Adams”. Coaches shall name themselves either “P” for prosecution or “D” for defense and “Coach”. Presiders and scorers will also be similarly named.

3.3 Screens. To avoid confusion, all participants shall have a black or blank screen when video is turned off. Participant shall not have any pictures, labels or wording other than authorized above on their respective screens.

3.4 Participants can determine whether to use gallery or speaker mode.

3.5 Virtual Courtroom Requirements. For purposes of fairness and uniformity, the following trial procedures will be followed:

a. Students must be seen within the screen at least waist up with 2” clearance from the head to the top of the screen.

b. Participants must wear appropriate courtroom attire.

c. A muted back drop is requested. Due to band width concerns, electronic backgrounds are not permitted.

d. Pre-Trial and Trial Attorneys will stand when performing or addressing the court (except when making objections) and must be a minimum of 2 feet away from the camera.

e. Per Case Materials, Stipulation 11, in court identification is not required. Those wishing to perform an in-court identification may do so based upon the identification during introductions.

f. Per CRF guidelines, share screening is not permitted. Exhibits may not be displayed on the screen. All witnesses, attorneys, scorers and presiders shall have their own copy of case materials and team rulebook. Attorneys may refer to the exhibits during their examinations.

g. In the event of a power failure or loss of internet connection, a student performer has up to 4 minutes to resolve the issue. If the student performer cannot resolve the connection issues in four (4) minutes, a backup performer shall substitute in and continue in that role until the witness examination is completed. If the student is an attorney, he/she may resume participation in the trial after the affected witness examination or speech is completed. If a substitute is not used, the mandatory penalties for running out of time will be applied for the affected part.

h. Attorney Communication. Student attorneys, in compliance with the Team Rulebook, may use the “chat” function or their own cellphones to communicate with each other, but not with any witnesses or coaches, except during the 30 second consult after the Pre-Trial argument and at the conclusion of the case. Attorneys may still ask in open court for time checks from the Clerk.

i. Clerk Communication. The Clerk and Unofficial Timekeeper should confer through the “chat” function before notifying the presider of a potential timing dispute. Resolution of any timing dispute shall comply with the Team Rulebook.

j. Timers shall be on mute with video feed off except when to provide time signals and calling of time.

k. Unless performing, all participants shall turn off their microphones and turn the video feed off. For example, during the Pre-Trial Argument, the presider and the pre-trial attorneys may have their microphones and video cameras on. All others should be off. During the examinations, the directing attorney, crossing attorney and witness shall have their microphones and video cameras on.

3.6 Reading. The CRF rules regarding reading from notes shall apply to Zoom trials. Attorneys are permitted to use notes but witnesses may not. Scorers will be instructed to pay close attention to whether these rules are being followed. Students are strongly encouraged not to read during their performances.