



# Sacramento Mock Trial

## Online Competition

Rules included in this document are from the 2020-21 MT Team Rulebook Sac version. Rulebook is final authority on all rules for the competition.

### Overview

- Four preliminary rounds, and Quarter, Semi, and Final rounds (for teams that advance) all via Zoom.
- Your team will have access to Zoom trials, scores, comments and team information via Mock Trial PROcess online competition system.
- Students will present from the safety of their home, or (if allowed) have students at a school site.
  - Each student uses their own laptop, Chromebook, or desktop computer to participate.
  - If at a school, students should be in separate rooms.
- Judges and scoring attorneys will also access Zoom trials and scoring/comment sheets via PROcess.

### Technology

The trials take place via Zoom, but they are directly integrated into PROcess. Here's how easy it will be to navigate your trials via PROcess:

- Create log-in credentials for students that are unique to your team.
- Students and coaches Log-in to view team round pairings and other team info.
- Click on the blue JOIN COURTROOM button, at the scheduled time, to meet your trial opponent.
- After tabulations are complete, you can view your team's digital ballot(s), which includes scores, individual student rankings and written feedback from your judges.
- Judges score and input comments using PROcess.

- See your competition record and a list of ranked teams.
- Create a PROcess log-in for parents to view trials that are live-streamed from zoom. This way they won't inadvertently interfere with the actual zoom.

### The Day Of

- For the first round, on February 2nd, students and coaches will log-in to PROcess and click the JOIN COURTROOM button about 45 minutes before the trial start time.
- You will be greeted by a Trial Host who will put you and your team in a breakout room.
- During this time the host will make sure your team is named correctly and will do some video and microphone checks.
- Once checks are done with both teams, the Host will greet the judge and scoring attorneys and then bring everyone into the main Zoom courtroom to begin.
- The bailiff will call the court to order, team introductions will take place (cameras on), and the trial process will begin as normal according to the Judge script.
- There will be 30 seconds at the end of the pretrial and trial for team members to confer with their coaches via the chat feature.

### Online Trial Customs

The following are online courtroom customs we've developed along with the Constitutional Rights Foundation for presenting in virtual court. (see Rulebook for more info). All judges will be made aware of these practices and all teams are expected to abide by them:

## All Participants:

- Should have a neutral background without distractions. (see Virtual Event Set UP Guide)
- No virtual backgrounds are allowed. They take up too much bandwidth
- One person per screen at a time
- Must follow naming rule throughout trial
  - (P / D) Name - Role
- Must mute audio and video when not presenting
- All cell phones must be silenced or on vibrate
- Participants need to take precautions to have a quiet background during presentation.
- All participants including witnesses, attorney's, judges, and scoring judges should have a physical copy of the exhibits.
  - Witnesses may only refer to exhibits when prompted by an attorney.

## Judge / Scoring Attorney

- Presider must turn on video and unmute their microphone during the entire trial.
- Scoring Attorney's must have their video off and their microphone muted except when introducing themselves and during the debrief.

## Student Attorneys

- May elect to stand or remain seated while giving their:
  - Pretrial argument
  - Opening statement
  - Direct and cross examinations
  - Closing argument

- During witness examinations the two attorneys examining the witness should have their video on
- The attorney examining the witness will have their audio on
- The attorney not examining the witness will have their audio on mute
- If an attorney wants to raise an objection, the attorney can then unmute their audio to do so.
- Attorneys must remain seated while making objections.

## Witnesses

- Must remain seated for their examination
- During their examination, witness should have their video on and be unmuted
- May not use notes
- Must have access to exhibits but may only refer to them when prompted by the examining attorney.

## Clerk/Unofficial Timer

- Must have video off and audio muted when not presenting time warnings
- Turn on video and unmute audio, to provide visual and verbal warnings for the:
  - Two-minute
  - One-minute
  - 30 second
  - Stop

## Bailiff

- Bailiff may elect to stand or remain seated:
  - To call the court to order
  - To swear in witnesses
- Video and audio on when presenting.

## Technical Difficulty:

A technical difficulty includes: internet failure, computer difficulties, and audio/microphone failure. Camera failure is NOT considered a technical difficulty.

### Team Members

- In the event of a technical difficulty, a substitute team member may fill in as an emergency substitute for the team member experiencing technical difficulties.
  - You may designate your substitutes on your roster during Registration.
- Before substituting a role, the team member must notify the Presiding Judge (time stops during this transition and starts at soon as the presentation starts):
  - “Your honor, I would like to inform the court that I am (insert name) and I am substituting for (insert name) who is unable to compete due to technical difficulties.”
- The presentation will be scored on the presentation by the initial team member **and** the substitute, taken as a whole.
- Once unable to compete in a role, to minimize disruption, a student is not permitted to return and compete in the unfinished role. If the technical difficulties are resolved, they can participate in their other roles in the trial, if any.
- If a student’s video or audio is switched on while they are not presenting, the presiding judge or Trial Host will instruct the student to correct this immediately.

### Judge / Scoring Attorney

- If a Judge has technical difficulties or drops off of the Zoom call, the Trial Host will temporarily stop the trial (time stops). If the Judge is unable to return, the Trial Host

will contact the competition manager for direction.

- If a scoring attorney drops off of the Zoom call, the Trial Host will temporarily stop the trial to give the scoring attorney time to log back in. If after a short time, the scorer is not able to log back in, the trial will proceed and we will use the other scorers and judge scores.

## Tips

**Scrimmage** – It is highly encouraged to scrimmage prior to the actual competition. This will not only allow you to practice with presenting the case but also practicing the virtual competition rules and procedures.

**Internet** – A wired connection is better than a wi-fi connection. If you can, plug your device directly into your router. If you are using a wi-fi connection, be as close to your router as possible.

**Bandwidth** – Be aware of household usage. Try to have exclusive use of the internet in your home, if possible, during the trials to ensure the best connection. Also, close any unnecessary tabs during the trials to reduce bandwidth use.

**Zoom App** – Download the Zoom app for best results. If you cannot download the app, you can still join using the PROcess link.

**Zoom Updates** – It is highly recommended to continue to check for new updates and maintain the most updated Zoom app.

**Device** – Computer, laptop, tablet, or phone. It is recommended to use either a desktop computer or laptop. You can use a tablet or phone, but some features might be limited.

**Microphone** – You can use your computer microphone/speaker, an external microphone/speaker, earpiece, headset, etc. To minimize background noise, a headset or earpiece is a general best practice. For the computer microphone/speaker or an external microphone/speaker, be as close to the microphone as possible. We encourage to test the microphone with someone to make sure you are heard loud and clear on their side. We also encourage you to practice muting and unmuting your microphone.

**Push to Talk** – Zoom has a handy Push to Talk feature which ensures you not to fiddle around too much trying to unmute yourself every time you want to

Speak in a meeting. Simply press and hold the spacebar to temporarily unmute yourself.

**Backgrounds** – No virtual backgrounds. Virtual backgrounds (and profile pictures) are not allowed because they take up a lot of bandwidth. All participants should have a blank background (light neutral colors such as white, beige, or grey), if possible, without any distracting objects in the background.

**Lighting** – You want to make sure you have light (window or lamp) in front of you and not behind you.

**Exhibits** – All active team members and substitute must have the exhibits (and the case) readily available but may only refer when prompted to.

**Speaker or Gallery view** – There are two options available. You can pick one of the two view options;

this only impacts your view. In a speaker view, the person speaking takes up your screen view. In a gallery view, you will view all participants in a grid layout.

**Chat Feature** – Open the chat feature on the zoom menu bar. To send a private message scroll through the names on the list to select the person you want to send a private message to, then type message and send. You can select in advance the name you might want to send a message to and have it ready. (Reminder – only communication between trial attorneys (defendant) and between the clerk and unofficial timer is allowed during trial. Teams may communicate with coaches during the 30 second rule only.)

- No student or team may feign technical difficulties or invoke the technical difficulty rule for purposes other than a genuine technical difficulty. Such an act would violate the Rules of Competition and Code of Ethical Conduct and may result in point deductions or other means up to and including disqualification from the competition.
- No student, teacher, parent or other spectator is allowed to record or take photos or screen shots of a trial without the permission of the competition coordinator.