

Proposed Rule Changes

**(you know, if we have to do
this remotely)**

Missouri High School Mock
Trial Competition 2020-21

What are we trying to do?

- Review of rule changes adopted by the National Competition
- Emphasis on what to do in emergencies
- An effort to discourage cheating
- Try to provide some room for innovation
- Though the pandemic will be over soon (fingers crossed), travel for work and in-person presentations in other cities may be a thing of the past, so they'd better get some practice in now

Basics for Competition

- Competitions will be by Zoom
 - Two hosts per evening set up with a different Zoom site
 - Each team will need to log in from their individual computers, with TEAM NUMBER listed for their name, and nothing else
 - Hosts can then assign them to the breakout room for their trial
 - Once in the breakout room, students change their on-screen name to their name for Attorneys and Witness name for witness, and Timekeeper for, you know
 - You must log in by 5:30 pm on the night of competition
- For now, we envision permitting observers, who also must display the correct team number to be assigned to a breakout room, but no scouting! I mean, come on, we are trusting you here. They should change their name to a first name only
 - Observers, and all participants who are not currently taking part in that part of the case, should have their cameras set to off and microphones muted, unless directed by the judge
 - By turning off cameras, you can reset your Zoom screen to only hide those with cameras off, so that only a few people appear on screen, not all 40 people in the room

Timekeepers and Rosters

- After each witness, timekeepers shall confer using the “chat” feature regarding how much time remains for each team
- The timekeepers must signal time by posting the permitted time signals in the chatroom function of the virtual competition platform
- The timekeepers also may display Time Remaining cards by activating their camera to do so
- Students keeping time may use stopwatches or cellular phones. Any cellular phone used for timekeeping must be kept in airplane mode and silenced during the duration of the trial round
- Copies of the Team Roster & Duties Form must be completed and submitted to the Regional Coordinator and to the opposing team’s coach 24 hours before each round of the competition
- Teams must be identified only by their assigned code. Roles should include the preferred gender identification for each witness
- Copies of the Team Roster & Duties Form should also will be made available to the presiding judge and evaluators at the start of each trial by the **Regional Coordinator** or their designee.

The Virtual Courtroom

Etiquette

Most of this is common sense:

No virtual backgrounds will be permitted while cameras are on

The background displayed while cameras are off for both participants and non-participant observers must not include any indication of any school affiliation

Participants are responsible for the environment behind them while cameras are on

Witnesses and attorneys may have points deducted if evaluators have difficulty hearing them because of excessive background noise

0%

Of mockers lay foundation the same way, but...

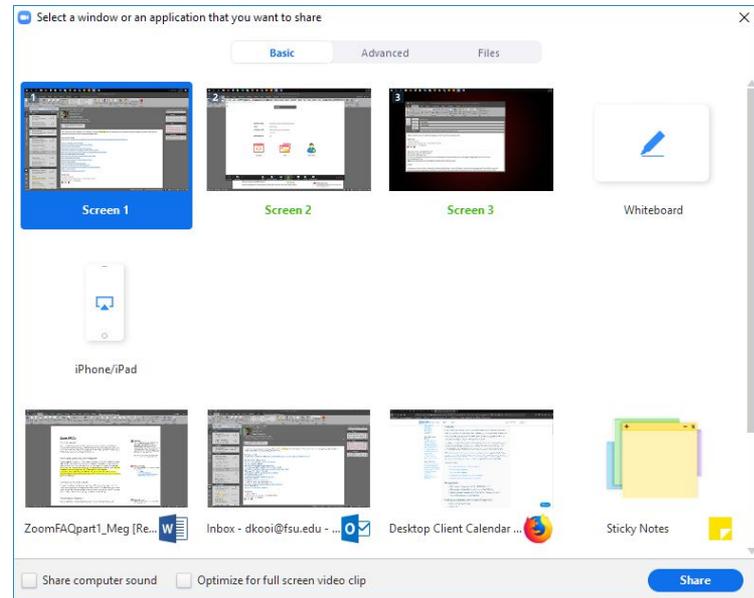
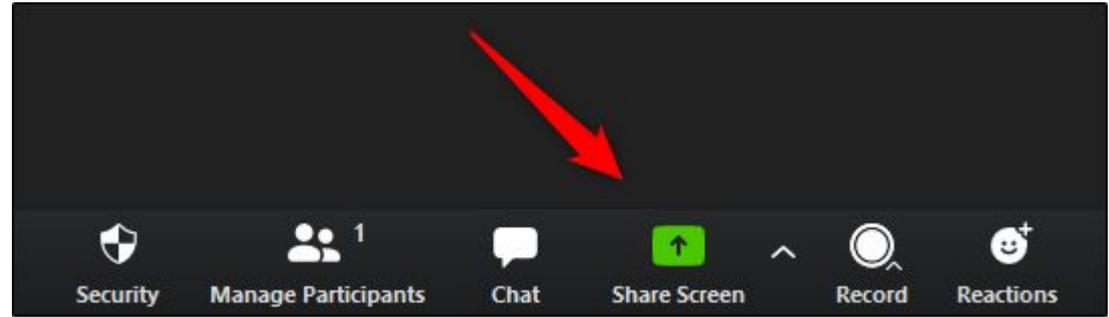
We copied the National Rules and put in a step by step guide for introducing exhibits into our local rules, so now EVERYONE should be doing it right!

Share Screen

A primer on virtual evidence

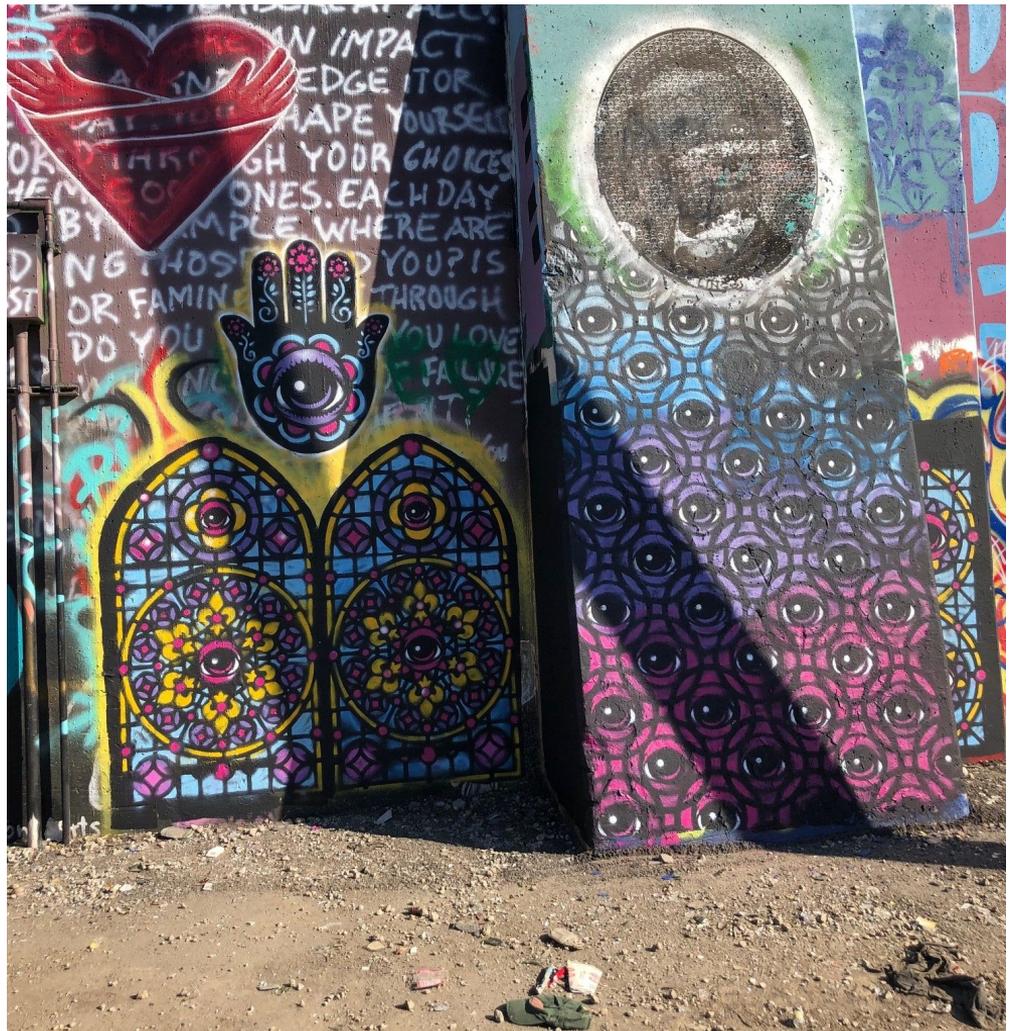
Basics of share screen

- Any team member can be the one to screen share
- Take it down when you're done
- Lawyers can tell presenters to put up or take down
- Witnesses should have a hard copy in front of them
- Exhibits may be screen shared before being admitted
- However, the jury will not be deemed to have viewed them until after they are admitted and permission given to publish to the the jury



How to add exhibit stickers in Adobe

- Presenting is easy using Adobe Acrobat
- Even the free version allows you to make marks on a .pdf that you can then save
- Update to the most recent Acrobat Reader
- Print the page from the problem as a .pdf file, it should be in your list of printers
- Open the new .pdf, and find the Comment tool on the right side
- Draw a text box
- Type in “Ex. A”
- Save as “Ex. A - marked”



The Astros

And what to do about it



Balancing Communication and Limiting Cheating

- Students will be socially distanced, or at least we are trying to set this up so they can be
- So how do attorneys and team members talk with one another?
- Will permit team members only to communicate during trial using their own private chat, cell phones, or other communication devices, but not with the lawyer or witness currently on-screen
- Timekeepers can not only communicate using the chat function on Zoom, or by activating their camera with time cards, and should communicate with the other timekeeper in the chat function on Zoom
- We have to trust coaches and family are not going to be giving advice during trials
- If it is apparent that a student is receiving advice while performing, it should be brought to the attention of the trial judge
- Witnesses and attorneys for a particular role must remain on screen and unmuted during the entire direct and cross of the witness
- Attorneys must perform while standing unless they seek permission from the judge ahead of time, and even then must keep their hands where we can see them
- **MAKE SURE YOU PRACTICE SO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE LOUD ENOUGH!**



Emergencies



Here is the Rule

Rule 1.3.B. Emergencies - Virtual Competitions

In the event of technical difficulties during the trial in a virtual competition, the presiding judge shall have discretion to declare a brief recess to resolve any technical difficulty substantially impairing a participant's participation in the trial. If the technical difficulty cannot be resolved within a reasonable, but brief, amount of time, then the trial will continue with another member of the impacted team substituting for the impacted team member. The emergency substitute must be a member of the same team as the impacted participant.

Before making an emergency substitution, the impacted team must make the presiding judge aware, by stating words to the effect of, "Your honor, before I begin 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." Teams shall advise the Regional Coordinator of any emergency substitution following the round of competition.

The presentation will be scored based on the performance by the initial team member and the emergency substitute, taken as a whole.

Here is the Rule - Part 2

Once the presiding judge determines either at the request of the team or sua sponte that a student is unable to compete in a role due to technical difficulties, to minimize disruption, the impacted student is not permitted to return and compete in the role for which a substitution was made. If the technical difficulty is resolved, the impacted participant may return and participate in his or her other roles, if any. For purposes of this rule, a witness examination consisting of direct, cross, any re-direct and any re-cross is one role, so that a participant who requires an emergency substitution for a witness examination may not return and participate until the entire witness examination is completed.

For purposes of this rule, technical difficulties include internet failure and computer, device or microphone failure; failure of a camera only does not permit emergency substitution under this rule. Students who lose internet connection shall rejoin the trial using a telephonic connection, if possible.

In the event of a loss of connection for a timekeeper, that team shall defer to its opponent's timekeeper for that trial segment. The team whose timekeeper lost connection may substitute another timekeeper qualified under Rule ___ for the remaining trial segments. The timekeepers shall confer consistent with Rule _____ regarding time remaining at the beginning of each trial segment.

Here is the Rule - Part 3

In the event that a technical emergency prevents an entire team from completing in part or all of a round, the presiding judge shall declare a recess of up to 15 minutes, to allow that team to reconnect, either via video or by connecting on audio-only via telephone. If reconnection is impossible, a forfeit shall be declared in favor of the team that maintains its connection. If at least five witnesses have been subject to cross-examination, the Regional Coordinator or their designee may in their sole discretion complete the ballot, assigning scores equal to their average score on all segments that could not be completed by the disconnected team and a “10” to the team that remained connected.

No student or team may feign technical difficulty or invoke the technical difficulty rule for purposes other than a genuine technical difficulty. Such an act would violate the Rules of Competition and Missouri High School Mock Trial Program Code of Conduct, and may be sanctioned at the discretion of the Regional Coordinator or their designees through point deductions or other means up to and including disqualification from the competition.