



# 2024-2025 Judge & Juror Guide

The Missouri High School Mock Trial Competition is presented by the Saint Louis Bar Foundation, The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, the Lawyers Association of Kansas City Young Lawyers Section, and the Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association, with grant funding from the Missouri Lawyer Trust Account Foundation.

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# Thank you!

Thank you for donating your time to help local high school students learn about our legal system. This program is in its 46th year and reaches more than 500 students from more than 40 schools throughout Missouri.

Students have labored for months preparing their presentation of this year's case and they value your experience and commitment to this learning process.

# Why this guide is helpful

We understand that you may not have read the case or mock trial rules. If you can understand and follow the questioning and arguments, this may show that the students have a clear understanding of the case, law, and presentation.

Do not be afraid to consult the rules during the trial.

# Trial Structure & the Case

# What is mock trial?

Mock trial is a simulation of a jury trial where **students portray attorneys and witnesses**.

The trial happens in the fictional Circuit Court of Southfield County, Missouri, which has its own Rules of Evidence (similar to the Federal Rules of Evidence). The students are limited to what is in the case packet. There is no Statutory or case law provided for the students, but you may assume that it mirrors Missouri law.

# This year's case

## *State of Missouri v. James Wild*

For decades, Pinebrook High School and College City High School had been friendly cross-town rivals. This rivalry extended to their respective mock trial teams, both of which competed in the Missouri High School Mock Trial Competition (undoubtedly the best program in the nation). Both Pinebrook and College City enjoyed tremendous success, having each won multiple state championships. Yet, tensions between the schools' mock trial coaches threatened an otherwise friendly rivalry. Unfortunately, things took a dark turn in the Spring of 2023 when Julius Jones, one of the Pinebrook attorney coaches, was found dead. After an investigation, prosecutors have charged James Wild, head coach of the College City mock trial team, with first degree murder. Wild has maintained his innocence, claiming to have evidence that Jones' surviving spouse—now a multi-millionaire thanks to a lucrative life insurance policy—is the true killer.

With neither side interested in a plea deal, this matter seems destined for trial...

# This year's case

## Witnesses

For the State of Missouri:

- Lennon Ravensburger, teacher at Pinebrook High School
- Archer Fritz, homicide detective with the Pinebrook Police Department
- Harper Klein, stay at home parent

For the Defense:

- Jess Fletcher, private investigator
- A.J. Still, freshman student at Truman State University
- Robin Atticus, human resource director with the U.S. Attorney's Office

# Trial components

Introductions

Opening Statements

Plaintiff Case-in-Chief

Defense Case-in-Chief

Customary Break (5 mins)

Closing Arguments



# Mock trial rules

- No pre-trial motions (although teams may have minor issues to address – like judges' preferences)
- **All witnesses are deemed to be sworn by the following statement:**  
**“Do you promise that the testimony you are about to give will faithfully and truthfully conform to the facts and rules of the mock trial competition?”**
- Stipulations are in the case materials and are already part of the record.
- Both sides must present opening statements at beginning of case.
- No objections are allowed during opening statements or closing arguments.
- Objections are constructively heard at the Bench but should be made so evaluators may hear the arguments.
- Each side must call three witnesses using three-to-four attorneys.
- Each attorney may only object for their assigned witness.
- Attorneys have the option to re-direct, but the scope is limited to the scope of the cross.
- Attorneys have the option to re-cross, but the scope is limited to the scope of the re-direct.

# Mock trial rules

- The only motion allowed is motion to strike after a successful objection.
- The rules do allow for a break. We recommend allowing five minutes before the start of closing arguments. Please remind the students and observers that students are not allowed to talk to anyone not involved in the trial – they cannot communicate with parents, coaches, or non-participating students.
- **Prosecution may reserve time for rebuttal prior to the start of their initial closing argument, but this is NOT required. Prosecution's rebuttal is automatically allowed if they have time remaining.**
- Prosecution's rebuttal must be within the scope of topics from defense closing.
- Please submit your ballots as quickly as possible after the trial. Since trials typically conclude late in the evening, please do not hold the students to give comments. Comments for teams may be submitted when submitting your ballot.
- Trials are governed by Missouri High School Mock Trial Local Rules and the Mock Trial Version of Federal Rules of Evidence.

# Mock trial rules

- Attorneys may object to “unfair extrapolation” or “beyond the scope of facts.” However, the preferred way of handling is to impeach on cross examination. See Local Rule 2.3 for specifics.
- Students are not permitted to quote case law not included in the case packet during the trial.
- Formal certification of experts is not required – expertise is established by laying proper foundation of the witness’s credentials. See Local Rule 2.2, ¶ 5.
- Witness roles are designed to be gender-neutral.
- In the event of an emergency during a trial, please return to the volunteer room to notify the Coordinator(s) immediately. Or call/text Danny at 314-252-0610.
- **Each trial will have a presiding judge and at least two jurors/evaluators unless we tell you otherwise. Please do not start the round before both evaluators are present.**
- **Please note that witnesses are scored separately for direct/re-direct examination and cross/re-cross examination, each worth up to ten points. Do not penalize the witness if the attorney chooses not to re-direct or re-cross.**

# Time Limits (Local Rule 4.5)

5 minutes	Opening statement for each side
30 minutes	Direct examinations for each side
20 minutes	Cross examinations for each side
1 minute	For each re-direct or re-cross per witness <i>(does not count against time for Direct or Cross)</i>
7 minutes	Closing arguments for each side

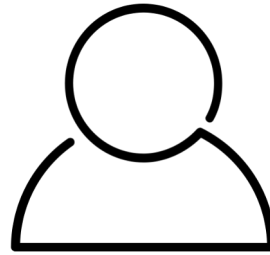
*Each school should have a timekeeper. You do not need to keep time – the schools will handle that for you and let you know when time is up.*

# Presiding, Scoring & Commenting

How to evaluate the round

## Your Role

You are here to “judge” the competition. You will do so in panels of three or more individuals.

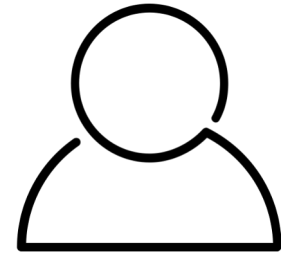


### JUDGE

#### **Preside**

(rule on objections,  
keep trial moving)

**Provide feedback**



### JUROR (x2)

#### **Score**

**Provide feedback**

**YOU ARE NOT  
REACHING A  
VERDICT.**

# Notes for the Presiding Judge

Your role is to preside over the trial by ruling on objections and keeping the trial moving. You also help students to enjoy this educational experience.

Students have teacher advisors and attorney coaches who are guiding them. You do not need to coach from the bench.



# Notes for the Presiding Judge

Both teams must...

- Present opening statements at the start of trial
- Call three witnesses
- Cross-examine all witnesses called
- Present closing arguments at the end of trial

# Notes for the Presiding Judge

- NO objections to opening statements or closing arguments
- NO motions in limine, for a directed verdict, or mistrial
- NO side bars
- NO objections or questions from the judge or jurors
- NO scope limitations on cross-examination (but scope is limited on re-direct and re-cross examination)
- NO requirement that expert witnesses be certified

# Notes for the Presiding Judge

## Do:

- Introduce yourself and encourage the jurors to do the same
- Rule on objections (based upon mock trial rules)
- Keep the trial moving
- Let the students argue objections back and forth no more than twice
- Make sure students stick to the time limits
- Pick a winner based upon the best overall teams performance (not verdict) by placing either a “**P**” or a “**D**” in the presiding judge box on the ballot – please make sure we can determine if it’s a P or D

# Notes for the Presiding Judge

## Don't

- Do not speak for the students – let them show you what they know
- Do not put yourself in the role of attorney – no questions to witnesses
- Do not “instruct” the students – remember they have coaches for that
- Do not consult with jurors on scoring
- Do not announce a winner or a verdict

# Unfair Extrapolation

- Fair extrapolations based upon the witness's statement may be allowed. A fair extrapolation is one that is neutral and can be reasonably inferred from the information in the witness's statement.
- An unfair extrapolation is one that has no basis in the witness's statement from the problem and has been invented by the witness in order to strengthen their testimony.
- If a witness is asked information not contained in the witness's statement, the answer must be consistent with the statement and may not materially affect the witness's testimony or any substantive issue of the case.
- Attorneys should not ask questions calling for information outside the scope of the case materials or requesting an unfair extrapolation. An attorney who asks a question on cross or re-cross examination that requires an answer outside the scope of the witness's affidavit is bound by the answer given by the witness,
- But it is presumed that a witness has identified each material action that the witness took and each material fact that the witness considered. Accordingly, a witness who has not identified an action taken or a fact considered in the witness's statement may not, upon cross-examination, claim to have taken a material action or considered a material fact.
- Unfair extrapolations are best attacked through impeachment of the witness and closing argument but students may object that an extrapolation is unfair. There is no objection to unfair extrapolation during or immediately following opening statement or closing argument and any objection should be made at the time the team attempts to elicit the unfair extrapolation during witness testimony.

# What to do

- Possible rulings by the presiding judge in response to such objection include:
  - A) no extrapolation has occurred;
  - B) an unfair extrapolation has occurred;
  - C) the extrapolation was fair; or
  - D) the ruling is taken under advisement.
- If the presiding judge finds the extrapolation is unfair, the extrapolation is deemed inadmissible and may be stricken from the record by appropriate motion. No party may then rely on the inadmissible fact in any other part of the trial.
- The presiding judge may not direct the evaluators to deduct points from any team, but the evaluators may decide to do so as part of their evaluation.

# Notes for the Jurors

Your role is to numerically score the presentation from 1-10 (10 being the highest score) based upon the performance of the students.

This is NOT an evaluation based upon the verdict.

# Notes for the Jurors

## Do:

- Introduce yourself when prompted by the Presiding Judge
- Evaluate students fairly and consistently using the criteria you will be provided
- Score as the trial goes on – it will be easier for you than trying to do it after the trial concludes. *We recommend having a printed copy of the sample ballot available during the trial to help you keep track.*
- Utilize your training and knowledge in evaluating the students – you do not have to agree with judge's rulings



# Notes for the Jurors

## Don't:

- Do not participate in the trial – you should appear as a silent juror
- Do not make comments or rule on objections
- Do not consult with other jurors or judge for scoring
- Do not give scores that result in a tie – scores must be adjusted to show which team gave the better performance (not verdict)
- Do not announce a winner or verdict

# Scoring framework

## **RANGE**

Score from **1-10**, with 10 being the highest score

No decimals, only whole numbers

No zeros\*

\* Unless the role didn't occur

## **CALIBRATION**

Score the differences between teams

Scale is less important than consistency

USE WHOLE  
NUMBERS, NO  
ZEROS, AND  
WRITE LEGIBLY.

# Implicit Bias

While we know that none of you will do this, it bears repeating:

- These are high school students
- They come from a lot of different economic, social, and religious backgrounds.
- We want all students and evaluators to be comfortable participating in Mock Trial
- **Do not** evaluate or comment on such things as:
  - How well tailored their clothing is
  - How they wear their hair
  - Student's gender or gender identity
  - Students' race
  - Students' religion
  - Students' country of origin

# Providing Comments

# Giving comments

- After the trial is complete, please submit your ballot immediately.
- All judges and jurors can submit comments to the teams via a comments form.

# Conflicts

# Conflicts

- If you have **already judged a team in your assigned courtroom this year**, please DON'T start the trial; inform the Mock Trial representative.
- If you are affiliated with a team in your assigned courtroom (i.e. your child is on the team or you attended the school), please DON'T start the trial; inform the Mock Trial representative.



Thank you again for volunteering your  
time in support of the  
**Missouri High School Mock Trial  
Competition**

**Missouri High School Mock Trial Competition**  
**Scoring Matrix**

Roles should be evaluated as compared to the average high school mock trial competitor.

	<b>Attorneys</b>	<b>Witnesses</b>
<b>POOR</b> (Scores of 1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role not presented</li> <li>• Extremely under-prepared</li> <li>• Shows extreme contempt for tribunal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role not presented</li> <li>• Extremely under-prepared</li> <li>• Shows extreme contempt for tribunal</li> </ul>
<b>BELOW AVERAGE</b> (Scores of 3-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated poor understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues</li> <li>• Poise and delivery needed work, was not persuasive</li> <li>• Asked questions intended to elicit unfair extrapolations; examinations were confusing or unclear</li> <li>• Little to no eye contact, with reliance on notes that detracted from performance</li> <li>• Voice difficult to hear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No portrayal of character</li> <li>• Performance felt generic or scripted</li> <li>• Responses were not thorough, persuasive, or natural</li> <li>• Little to no eye contact</li> <li>• Voice often difficult to hear</li> <li>• Overly combative on cross examination</li> <li>• Consistently invented factual material outside the case materials</li> </ul>
<b>AVERAGE</b> (Scores of 5-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated fair understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues</li> <li>• Delivery had some hesitation and/or stumbles</li> <li>• Missed appropriate opportunities to object; or made inappropriate or too many objections</li> <li>• Maintained eye contact some of the time</li> <li>• Reliance on script and notes to the detriment of the presentation</li> <li>• Voice sometimes difficult to hear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained passable portrayal of character</li> <li>• Performance was passable but lacked depth</li> <li>• Some response felt scripted</li> <li>• Eye contact maintained some of the time when appropriate</li> <li>• Voice sometimes difficult to hear</li> <li>• Sometimes combative on cross</li> <li>• Materially went outside the case materials once or twice</li> </ul>
<b>ABOVE AVERAGE</b> (Scores of 7-8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated above-average understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues</li> <li>• Persuasive delivery</li> <li>• Questions on direct &amp; cross were organized and delivered a clear presentation</li> <li>• Eye contact mostly maintained</li> <li>• Some use of notes, but was not distracting and did not take away from delivery</li> <li>• Voice was clear, audible, and confident</li> <li>• Objections and responses were appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained very good portrayal of character</li> <li>• Performance was mostly credible and convincing</li> <li>• Answered most cross questions appropriately</li> <li>• Maintained eye contact appropriately</li> <li>• Spoke loudly and clearly enough to be heard and understood</li> <li>• Appropriate answers on cross with few combative answers</li> <li>• Did not deviate from case materials; Responses were consistent with the facts</li> </ul>
<b>OUTSTANDING</b> (Scores of 9-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates excellent understanding of the case, rules, and legal issues</li> <li>• Near flawless poise &amp; delivery</li> <li>• Asked compelling questions on direct and cross examinations: Made appropriate objections and argued effectively</li> <li>• Avoided unfair extrapolations</li> <li>• Controlled witness on cross-examination</li> <li>• Maintained eye contact with minimal to no reliance on notes</li> <li>• Spoke loudly and clearly enough to be heard and understood</li> <li>• Demonstrated understanding of legal procedure/reasoning, could “think on feet”</li> <li>• Worked well with other team members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained excellent portrayal of character throughout trial, even when not testifying</li> <li>• Believable performance; Showed emotion &amp; affect appropriate to role</li> <li>• Responses showed excellent understanding of witness statement and facts</li> <li>• Maintained eye contact that engaged the listeners</li> <li>• Spoke loudly and clearly that engaged the listeners</li> <li>• Maintained poise during cross examination; did not become inappropriately combative on cross, but did not “roll over”</li> <li>• Gave responses that helped his or her team, without inventing material facts on direct examination</li> </ul>