



MEMORANDUM

To: St. Louis Regional High School Mock Trial Coaches and Teachers

From: Missouri High School Mock Trial Competition Steering Committee

Date: September 8, 2025

Re: “Skills” Division for 2026 Mock Trial Season

Introduction and Background

Based on feedback from coaches and teachers in the St. Louis region, the High School Mock Trial Steering Committee (the “Steering Committee”) recently announced its intention to develop and implement a new “Skills” Division within the St. Louis region of the Missouri High School Mock Trial Competition. This division would allow schools to form teams of first-year mock trial competitors to compete against other schools’ “Skills” teams. The goal of the new division is to help schools develop their younger competitors in a less stressful environment, without concern of facing another schools’ “Championship” teams.

After several meetings through the summer, the Steering Committee has decided to implement the new “Skills” division in two phases. Phase I will be a hybrid division offered in the 2026 season as a “test run” of the new program. The guidelines for Phase I are set forth in this memorandum. If the first phase is successful, Phase II will begin in the 2027 season with more details to come.

Guidelines for Phase I

At the time they register,¹ each school participating in the 2026 season may, but is not required to, designate no more than two of their teams as “Skills” teams. Each student competing on a “Skills” team must be a first-year competitor. In other words, the students on the “Skills” teams may not have competed in any prior round of any prior high school mock trial season. Because BAMSL does not have a database of all students who have competed, coaches and teachers will be expected to honor this requirement in good faith.

Each school’s “Skills” team will compete on either Tuesday or Thursday night of Rounds 1 and 2, based on the school’s preference. For example, if Acme Academy indicates to BAMSL that it wants

¹ As of the date of this memorandum, BAMSL has not yet released the registration dates.

its teams to compete on Tuesday night, Acme Academy's "Skills" and "Championship" teams will both compete on Tuesday night.

When BAMSL creates the pairings for Rounds 1 and 2, it will ensure that "Skills" teams are only paired against other schools' "Skills" teams. While BAMSL will do everything possible to ensure the "Skills" trials have two scoring jurors (plus a presiding judge), it is possible that "Skills" trials will only have one scoring juror and a presiding judge. BAMSL will prioritize placing general scoring and presiding judge volunteers in "Championship" trials. Additionally, when teams provide volunteer judges and jurors as required by Local Rule 5.2, BAMSL will prioritize placing those volunteers in "Skills" trials unless those volunteers are needed to provide two scoring jurors in "Championship" trials.

Importantly, "Skills" teams will not qualify for advancement to the regional or state championship tournaments. To illustrate this point:

Acme Academy has four teams in the competition, three are "Championship" teams and one is a "Skills" team. Acme Academy's "Skills" team finishes Round 2 with a total of 5 ballots and a +36 point differential. Under normal circumstances, Acme Academy's "Skills" team would be ranked in the top 16 teams in the St. Louis region. However, BAMSL will remove Acme Academy's "Skills" team from the rankings following conclusion of Round 2. After doing so, and after removing other schools' "Skills" teams (and accounting for any schools with multiple top-16 teams), Acme Academy's next best team is ranked 18th. Accordingly, Acme Academy will *not* advance to the regional tournament.

Please reach out to Danny Barnett-Foster at dbarnett@bamsl.org with any questions.

Questions and Answers

This memorandum will be updated with questions and answers, some of which are provided already by BAMSL.

Question 1: If a student competes in a high school mock trial competition in another state, then transfers to Missouri, is that student prohibited from competing in the "Skills" division?

Answer 1: Yes.

Question 2: Are first-year students required to compete on "Skills" teams?

Answer 2: No. Participation in the "Skills" division is completely voluntary. Schools may form "Championship" teams that consist of one or more first-year students.

Question 3: If a school advances to either the regional and/or state championship tournament, can the school put a student that competed on a “Skills” team on the school’s regional/state championship roster?

Answer 3: Yes, the school may still organize their regional/state championship rosters as they like.

Question 4: May a student on a “Skills” team substitute for another student on a “Championship” team or vice-versa?

Answer 4: No. Schools are encouraged to build their rosters with alternates, when possible, to avoid the need for substitutes to switch between divisions or teams.