



**Orange County
High School Mock Trial
Competition**

**2020-2021
Orientation Handbook**

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Mock Trial – An Introduction

Welcome to Orange County High School Mock Trial! Though this year's competition will look and feel different due to the ongoing pandemic, we look forward to working with you to make this an exciting educational experience for the students.

In the pages that follow, you will find important information about the Orange County Mock Trial Competition. This packet is designed to enhance and supplement both the formal mock trial case packet and the competition rules. Should you have any questions not answered herein, please contact CRF-OC Program Director, Theresa Bernard at tbernard@crfoc.org.

Program Notices for 2020-2021 Season

Virtual Competition

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this year's competition will be conducted virtually via Zoom. The 2020-2021 Team Rulebook with Orange County Appendix explains the procedures and rules for a virtual competition in greater detail. All teams should carefully review the entire rulebook in advance of the competition.

CRF-OC wants to ensure that all schools have the ability to effectively participate in the virtual competition in February. To that end, if any of your students have internet connectivity issues that cannot be resolved through the school, please contact CRF-OC staff.

COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols

Team members and coaches must abide by all federal, state, local, school district and/or school policies regarding COVID-19 and any other infectious diseases when participating in any mock trial related activities (including, but not limited to, practices, scrimmages, and competitions). Failure to adhere to these health and safety protocols may result in disqualification from the competition.

Major Competition Changes for Virtual Format

The role of bailiff has been eliminated this season. Instead, each team will be required to have a clerk. Please review Rule 3.8 for a complete explanation of the procedures. The presiding judge will swear in all witnesses at the beginning of the trial.

The courtroom art and journalism competitions have been suspended for the 2020-2021 season.

The winner of the Orange County competition will be determined by a single round between the top two teams.

P/D Assignments

Following the same procedure as last season, in January prosecution/defense assignments for rounds 1 and 2 will be randomly drawn and announced to teams. After the conclusion of round 2, CRF-OC staff will notify teams of their prosecution/defense assignments for rounds 3 and 4. Each team will be assured of competing twice as prosecution and twice as defense, though they may not alternate sides from round 2 to round 3. For this reason, all team members should anticipate that they may need to be available to compete on both Tuesdays and Thursdays during the first two weeks of February.

Case Packet and Other Competition Materials

Registered schools were issued a username and password to the CRF-OC website to access the case packet in their registration confirmation email. All other competition forms and documents will be available on a shared Google folder at: <https://tinyurl.com/ocmt2021>. Please bookmark this link for future reference. Because this year's competition is virtual, forms used for the competition have been changed and will be uploaded to the shared folder as they become available.

Reasonable Accommodations

If a member of your team has a recognized disability that requires accommodation in order for them to actively participate in the competition, please contact CRF-OC staff as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made in advance of the competition.

Competition Updates on Social Media

CRF-OC invites you and your students to follow us on Twitter @OC_Mock_Trial for competition updates, including notifications on the release of win/loss results.

You can also follow us on Instagram @crf_oc and facebook.com/CRFOC.

Objective and Ethics

A copy of the Program Objectives and Code of Ethics can be found in the case packet and Team Rulebook with Orange County Appendix. Please take the time to read and discuss the Program Objectives, Code of Ethics, and Team Rulebook with your students.

Competition Schedule

The Zoom rooms will open at 4:00 pm. All teams (including students, coaches, observers, substitutes) should sign on by 4:30 pm. This will enable CRF-OC staff to sort the teams into their breakout rooms ahead of when the volunteers begin checking in. Rounds 1-8 will start no later than 5:15 pm. Most trials will end around 7:30 pm.

1. Preliminary Rounds of Competition for 2020-2021

Round 1– Tuesday, February 2
Round 2 – Thursday, February 4
Round 3 – Tuesday, February 9
Round 4 – Thursday, February 11

2. Playoff (single elimination) Rounds of Competition:

Round 5 – Tuesday, February 16 (Sweet 16)
Round 6 – Thursday, February 18 (Elite Eight)
Round 7 – Tuesday, February 23 (Final Four)
Round 8 – Thursday, February 25 (Championship Round)

3. Other Important Dates:

Virtual Mock Trial Awards Ceremony: April 22, 2021. Award winners will be notified by the end of March. Exact time TBA.

California Mock Trial State Championship: March 18-21, 2021 (If in-person, competition will be held in Los Angeles, CA)

For more information please visit the CRF-USA website: www.crf-usa.org

National Mock Trial Championship: May 13-15, 2021 (If in-person, competition will be held in Evansville, IN)

For more information visit: www.nationalmocktrials.org

Important Dates & Deadlines

1. **Virtual Mandatory Coaches' Meeting: November 17, 2020 at 5:00 pm** – At least one coach from each team must attend.
2. **Google Team Roster Deadline: December 2, 2020** – All teams are required to submit a complete list of participating students to CRF-OC. Teams must submit the list using the online Google document form provided in their registration confirmation email. Failure to submit a roster by the deadline may result in disqualification of the team. Teachers should notify CRF-OC staff if anyone on their team drops out of the competition after this deadline. *Please*

note that this form is separate from the Competition Team Roster form that is submitted before each round.

3. **Student Registration Deadline: December 2, 2020** – All students listed on the Google team roster form are required to submit the online student registration form at <https://www.crfoc.org/mt-studentregistration/>. CRF-OC staff will email teachers the list of students that have registered in the weekly competition update email. Teachers should review the list each week to see which students have registered and inform staff if there are any errors. Teachers should remind students that have not submitted the form to do so. CRF-OC staff will use the Google team roster provided by the teacher to verify that the students registered are indeed members of the team.
4. **Team Registration Fee: December 2, 2020** – The registration fee is \$1,100.00. Teachers will be sent an invoice in their registration confirmation email. Teams that do not pay their registration fee by the deadline are subject to disqualification. Teams that withdraw from the competition may be responsible for paying the full registration fee.
5. **Attorney Coach Ethics Form: December 2, 2020** – Attorney coaches must confirm that they have read and agree to abide by the competition rules and code of ethics. Only one form should be submitted per team. All participating attorney coaches should be listed on this form.

Competition Format

1. The pairings for rounds 1-4 will be decided by a random draw, with no team competing against the same team twice. Each team will be assured of competing twice as prosecution and twice as defense. Teams will be given their prosecution and defense assignments for rounds 1 and 2 in January and their assignments for rounds 3 and 4 the day after round 2.
2. Upon completion of round 4, only the top 16 teams will advance to round 5. Advancement will be determined first by win/loss record. In the event of a tie, the highest average point differential and strength of schedule for the first four rounds will be the deciding factor.
3. Round 5 commences the single elimination format. The top sixteen teams will be seeded according to their record. During this, and the remaining rounds, a concerted effort will be made to match teams according to the following criteria:
 - a. That the overall seeding format is preserved
 - b. That each team competes against a team not previously encountered

- c. That teams reverse prosecution/defense roles in each consecutive round
4. **Scoring Rounds 1-8:** Winners of each round will be determined by the team that has won the most scorecards during the match. The team with the most points on a scorecard wins the card. If there is a tie, the team with the highest number of total points from all scorecards wins. If the teams are still tied, the presiding judge's tiebreaker will determine the winner of the round.

Clerk

1. Each team is responsible for training their clerk prior to the competition.
2. Clerks are scored on a 5-point scale.
3. The clerk will record the precise time elapsed during each section of the presentation.
4. When "time" is called, the student speaking must stop immediately. There will be no allowance for overtime.
5. Refer to the California Mock Trial Program Team Rulebook with Orange County Appendix for further details regarding timing.

Team Structure Guidelines

1. The rules regarding team structure are located in the Team Rulebook. In addition to these rules, CRF-OC makes the following recommendations in order to ensure that your team gets the most out of their mock trial experience:
 - a. Teams should utilize the maximum allowable number of trial attorneys (the minimum is 2 and the maximum is 3).
 - b. Teams should have different attorneys present the opening statement and closing argument.
 - c. Each trial attorney should perform at least one direct examination and one cross-examination.
 - d. Teams should involve as many students as possible in other support roles.
2. Mock Trial teams must consist of a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of twenty-five (25) students. A minimum of 12 students must be recruited for each school at the time of registration.

Errata

1. After the release of the case materials, errata are often issued by CRF-USA. CRF-USA is a separate organization based in Los Angeles that creates and licenses the mock trial case materials and coordinates the state competition in March. Teams will be notified of any errata by CRF-OC staff. Approved errata will be posted in the shared Google folder.
2. Teams are encouraged to carefully review the case materials and submit any questions or issues to Lourdes Morales, the Senior Program Director at CRF-USA by **December 11, 2020**. No changes will be made to the case materials after this date. **CRF-USA incorporates all of the errata into a new case packet in January that will be the official packet used in the Orange County Competition and at the state competition in March.**

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Odd Number of Teams

1. We ask that each team indicate on the registration form whether they have enough students to present both prosecution and defense cases in the same evening.
2. In the event that an odd number of schools register for the competition, CRF-OC staff will select a “ghost” team for each round.
3. The “ghost” team's score will not count toward their team’s overall ranking.

Competition Team Roster Form

1. The Competition Team Roster form will include the students’ names and the role that each of the student participants will be performing during that round of competition.
2. All teams are required to post the order that their prosecution and defense witnesses will be called on a shared Google document sheet by **January 26, 2021** (CRF-OC staff will include this document in the shared folder). Teams may not make changes to their witness order after this date.

3. CRF-OC will email the matchups for each round to coaches by 4:00 pm the day before the round. After determining which school your team will be paired against, you should look up the witness order of the opposing team on the shared Google document. This will enable you to fill out the Competition Team Roster form for your team completely before submitting it to CRF-OC staff.
4. The Competition Team Roster form must be submitted to CRF-OC staff by 9:00 am the morning of each round. The student names on this form should match the names and roles of the students entering the zoom main room. Everyone should follow the naming rules found in the rulebook to be entered into their assigned courtroom.

Online Award Nomination Form

1. The Mock Trial Award nomination form must be submitted to CRF-OC by 8:30pm the night of each round. The form should be completed by a coach. Only one form should be submitted per team. The link to form will be distributed by CRF-OC staff in advance of the round.
2. Submission of this form is required in order to receive your team's individual scores the following day. Coaches should refer to the opposing team's roster when completing the form.
3. Student MVP Awards: At the end of the round, your team should select an MVP from the opposing team. Coaches should note their team's selection of the opposing team's MVP on their online nomination form. CRF-OC staff will email coaches MVP certificates to give to their students following the conclusion of the competition.

Virtual Courtroom Check in Procedure

1. Coaches will be emailed their team's opponent, courtroom number, and a link to the Zoom courtroom by 4:00 pm the day prior to each round. Coaches should share this link with authorized participants only. Note: Teams may have a maximum of 17 screens (including active team members, substitutes, coaches, and observers) in the Zoom courtroom. See Team Rulebook for further details.
2. In order to be admitted to the designated virtual courtroom, coaches should instruct authorized participants to follow the naming rules as outlined in the Team Rulebook. The display names of students and their roles should match what is listed on the Competition Team Roster Form. **Participants should alter their display name before signing into Zoom.**

3. The virtual courtrooms will open at 4:00 pm. All authorized participants must sign-on no later than 4:30 pm. This will enable CRF-OC staff to sort the teams into their breakout rooms ahead of when the volunteers begin checking in.

Score Notification

1. For each round of competition, the win/loss results will be posted on the Mock Trial page of the CRF-OC website at: <https://www.crfoc.org/programs/mock-trial>. During the preliminary rounds, CRF-OC staff will make every effort to publish the win/loss results online by noon the following day. During the playoffs, staff will make every effort to publish the win/loss results online the same evening as the trial. Teams should check CRF-OC's Mock Trial Twitter account for updates on the release of results.
2. Individual scores will be **e-mailed to the coach(es)** of each team. CRF-OC staff will not send individual scores to students. Every effort will be made to have individual scores distributed within 24 hours of the competition. If comments are provided by volunteers, CRF-OC staff will send them with the individual scores. Please note that not all volunteers provide comments.
3. Scoring information **will not** be given out via telephone, fax or to additional e-mail addresses other than the teams' teacher and attorney coach(es).

Awards

1. In order to show appreciation for the extensive volunteer efforts of teachers, judges, attorneys, and law firms, we ask that students and/or coaches fill out the Adult Volunteer Award Nomination Form. A copy of this form is available in the shared Google folder. All nominations must be submitted to CRF-OC staff by the end of Round 8.
2. Teams may also nominate another team for the "Team Civility Award" to recognize teams that display professionalism and fair play during the competition. If during the course of the competition a team feels that another team should be recognized for their civility, the coaches and/or team captain should complete the nomination form and return it to CRF-OC staff. Teams may not nominate their own team for an award. All nominations must be submitted to CRF-OC staff by the end of Round 8.
3. CRF-OC staff will list the students that were nominated for an award each round on the CRF-OC website.

4. Award winners will be notified by the end of March. The awards ceremony will be conducted virtually.