

Rules of Competition (Preliminary)

National Association of Moot Court

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1. Goals And Purpose

The National Association of Moot Court is meant to be a space for high school students to develop their oral advocacy skills through rigorous competition. In this space, competing students and their coaches are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and sportsmanship at all times. While participating in a NAMC-sponsored tournament, competitors are expected to abide by all laws of the jurisdiction in which they are competing.

These Rules are constructed, and shall be applied, with the intention of promoting learning, fair competition, and an appreciation for moot court. These rules are the final authority for resolving all conflicts within the tournament.

2. Eligibility And Team Composition

2.1. Eligibility.

All competitors must be enrolled in middle school, high school, or the equivalents in their educational jurisdiction. Competitors on a given team must attend the same school unless they have permission from the tournament director to compete otherwise. Competitors from all institutions must designate one coach who is not competing in the tournament to serve as their institution's official representative.

2.2. No Substitutions.

A team of the same two competitors must represent the Petitioner and/or the Respondent for every round of the Tournament. Substitutions are not permitted once the Tournament begins.

2.3. Exceptions.

NAMC reserves the right to make exceptions to these eligibility rules at any time as it deems necessary to serve the best interests of competition.

3. Conduct Of Tournament Rounds.

3.1. Timekeeping.

3.1.1. Timekeeping — General.

Prior to the beginning of each round, each team shall indicate to the timekeeper and judges how it wishes to allocate its time. Each team shall have 20 minutes to divide between the team's two competitors. No competitor shall have an allocated speaking time shorter than seven minutes, and no competitor shall have an allocated speaking time longer than thirteen minutes.

3.1.2. If There Is No Official Timekeeper.

If there is no timekeeper to monitor time, and there is no other individual in the courtroom whom the judges can appoint as timekeeper, each team shall keep time for the opposing team.

- 3.1.3. **Timekeeping — Communication (Virtual Tournaments).**
Time should be kept using a computer- or tablet-based timing program, like vClock, Google, or a device timer app. Timekeepers, official or competing, should share the timer on-screen in view of all competitors and judges using Zoom’s “share screen” function. When time has elapsed, the timekeeper should unmute themselves and call “time,” unless the speaking competitor has received an extension pursuant to Rule 3.1.6.
- 3.1.4. **Timekeeping — Technical Difficulties.**
At the discretion of the Chief Justice, competitors may request that timekeeping stop while substantially disruptive technical difficulties are being resolved.
- 3.1.5. **Timekeeping For Rebuttal.**
Petitioners may reserve up to three minutes for rebuttal only before beginning their oral argument. This time must be allocated from the 20 total minutes allowed for the petitioner’s argument.
- 3.1.6. **Extension Of Oral Argument.**
Judges may permit a brief extension of oral argument if a competitor’s time is exhausted while they are answering a judge’s question and they request such an extension. Outside this exception, competitors shall stop speaking when their allocated time has elapsed.

3.2. Use of Resources.

- 3.2.1. **Use Of Notes And Visual Aids.**
Competitors may use notes at any time during the round. No presentation devices or exhibits of any kind may be used in oral argument. Competitors may not submit a written brief to the bench.
- 3.2.2. **No Coaching During Rounds.**
No person, other than a competitor’s partner, may contact or attempt to contact by any means, whether personally or through another person, directly or indirectly, verbally or nonverbally, a competitor during a round for the purpose of giving advice, counsel, suggestions, or support.
- 3.2.3. **Use Of Cell Phones, Smart Watches, And Similar Devices.**
The use of cell phones, smart watches, and similar communication devices by competitors during a round is prohibited.
- 3.2.3.1. **Communication With The Tournament Director.**
The prohibition in Rule 3.2.3 does not apply to communications with the Tournament Director during virtual tournaments. Technological problems should be addressed to the Tournament Director.

3.2.3.2. **Use Of Devices For Timekeeping.**

A phone may be used for the purposes of timekeeping at the discretion of the Chief Justice.

3.2.3.3. **Communication Between Partners.**

During a virtual round, competitors may communicate with their partners, and only their partners, using the Zoom chat.

3.3. Elements Of The Round.

3.3.1. **Order Of Elements.**

Elements of every tournament round shall proceed in the following order:

1. Competitor Introductions (at the discretion of the chief justice)
2. Petitioner Case (Up to 20 minutes)
 - 2a. Petitioner first speaker
 - 2b. Petitioner second speaker
3. Respondent Case (20 minutes)
 - 3a. Respondent first speaker
 - 3b. Respondent second speaker
4. Petitioner's Rebuttal (up to three minutes, counted against the Petitioner's 20 minutes)
5. Scoring and Feedback

3.3.2. **Rebuttal.**

The purpose of a rebuttal is to respond to the Respondent's arguments, and it is inappropriate for competitors to attempt to introduce new arguments during the rebuttal.

3.3.3. **Feedback.**

After hearing arguments from both teams, and only after resolving any disputes and submitting their ballots, judges should, if time permits, offer evaluations of performance in a short "feedback" period.

3.4. Closed Problems.

(Adapted from AMCA Rule 3.14) The NAMC Case Problem exists in a closed universe. Students may discuss cases outside the Table of Authorities solely to the extent that they are quoted and cited within the official cases. Judges will be instructed to deduct points as a penalty for use of prohibited materials.

Comment to Rule 3.5: For example, if a case is simply included in a string citation, that case cannot be discussed unless the student says that this case of X v. Y was cited by the court in [official case within the record] to support its holding. Any detailed

discussion of the facts or reasoning of X v. Y would be inappropriate unless those matters specifically appear in the official case.

4. Violations Of The Rules.

4.1. Major Violations

If, after a round, a team or their coach (if applicable) feels that their opponent has egregiously violated the rules, then they may raise that concern to the tournament directors. The following constitute a non-exclusive list of egregious violations of the rules:

- Issues that would be too contentious to handle during a round, including coaching during a round in violation of Rule 3.2.2
- Serious issues that students are uncomfortable addressing, including physical or verbal abuse of any person in the courtroom
- Issues more appropriate for tournament staff than presiding judges, including the use of an ineligible person as a team member

The tournament director, or a representative of the tournament director, shall adjudicate the violation in a manner consistent with the text of these rules, the purpose of these rules, and the goals of the tournament.

