

ABA SECTION OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW STUDENT EMPLOYMENT TRIAL ADVOCACY COMPETITION

STRUCTURE AND RULES

- **Structure of competition**
 - During preliminary round(s) each team will represent plaintiff and defendant at least once.
 - In subsequent rounds, teams will sue or defend as follows: if the teams have met before, teams will switch sides; otherwise a coin toss will determine the assignment of sides.
 - Two teams with the highest scores will meet in the championship round.

- **Length of trial**
 - Each trial should last about three hours, followed by approximately 30 minutes of comments by the judge and evaluators.

- **Rules**
 - Teams must consist of four law students enrolled, in good standing, currently attending the law school which they represent, and working towards a J.D. degree or its equivalent
 - Certification of current registration in law school for each team member must be included in each team's Entry Form.
 - The signature of a member of the law school faculty is required on the Entry Form.
 - Team may be accompanied by a coach and or a faculty advisor.
 - Teams will not identify the school they are representing to the evaluators or judges.
 - In each trial round, two students will be advocates and two students will be witnesses for their own trial team.
 - A student may be an advocate or a witness in any trial, but cannot be both advocate and witness in the same trial.
 - Two student advocates who represent plaintiff will be witnesses when their team represents employer.
 - Two students who are plaintiff's witnesses will be defense counsel when the team represents the defendant.

- **Scoring**
 - The overall performance of a student will be evaluated including scores for:
 - OPENING STATEMENT
 - CLOSING ARGUMENT
 - DIRECT EXAMINATION
 - CROSS EXAMINATION

- OBJECTIONS
- FOUNDATIONS
- USE of EXHIBITS
- STYLE, Demeanor

- Each student advocate will wear a number, and judges/evaluators will use the number throughout competition.
- Students may introduce themselves by name, and to refer to each other by name throughout the trial, but score should be awarded to the identification number the student wears.

In scoring judges should consider:

- Effective presentation of witnesses and exhibits
- Coherence and clarity of presentation
- Effectiveness of delivery
- Poise and demeanor
- Focus on relevant issues
- Use of most powerful evidence
- Logical ordering of evidence and effective use of time
- Originality and creativity
- Effectiveness in responding to opposing evidence, arguments, and surprises

Evaluations should not be affected by their personal views of the merits of the case, but persuasiveness of presentation should receive great weight.