

SCORING PROCESS

We have shifted to an online score sheet that judges use to score teams, but judges still score teams on a 1 to 10 scale (outlined below). The 14 scoring categories for each side include:

- Opening statements
- Attorney direct examination (x3)
- Attorney cross examination (x3)
- Witness direct examination (x3)
- Witness cross examination (x3)
- Closing arguments

For practice purposes, we have created a hard copy score sheets that teams can use as they prepare for competition. The score sheet is included at the end of this document.

In addition to scores, each judge may choose up to three outstanding witnesses and outstanding attorneys per round.

Teams will receive their completed score sheets after they have completed their three rounds of regional trials and after the state competition.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR WHEN SCORING

ATTORNEY PERFORMANCE

OPENING STATEMENTS

- Provides a short summary of the facts of the case
- Introduces a theory for the case (what happened and why it happened)
- Provides an overview of the witnesses, their testimony, the evidence, and how the evidence will prove the case
- Outlines the applicable law and/or statutes to be covered as well as the burden of proof for the case
- Requests relief (what the side is asking the court to decide)

DIRECT EXAMINATION

- Demonstrates an understanding of the rules of competition and rules of evidence
- Asks properly phrased open-ended questions that are logically sequenced, address actual testimony, and allow for an explanation or a description of the situation
- Lays a foundation for witness testimony and asks questions that elicit relevant evidence
- Avoids asking leading questions or questions that require an unfair extrapolation
- Follows the proper protocol for showing prior statements to the witness and introducing exhibits

Scoring Guidelines

- Makes objections and responds to objections utilizing rules of evidence or the rules of competition
- Utilizes objections as a means to forward the case and not just to throw the other side off their game
- Recovers well after objections and quickly adjusts to the judge's rulings
- Continues to weave the case theory into witness questioning
- Limits redirect examination to questions asked during cross examination and witness rehabilitation

CROSS EXAMINATION

- Demonstrates an understanding of the rules of competition and evidence
- Asks properly phrased questions that weaken the testimony given during direct examination or elicits facts favorable to the attorney's own case
- Uses narrow questions that suggest a yes or no answer and attempts to appropriately control the witness testimony
- Impeaches the witness without appearing to harass or intimidate the witness
- Follows the proper protocol for showing prior statements to the witness and introducing exhibits
- Makes objections and responds to objections utilizing rules of evidence and the rules of competition
- Utilizes objections as a means to forward the case and not just to throw the other side off their game
- Recovers well after objections and adjusts to the judge's rulings
- Continues to weave the case theory into witness questioning
- Limits recross examination to questions asked during redirect examination

CLOSING ARGUMENTS

- Summarizes the case presented and pulls in specifics from the trial
- Summarizes the evidence with reasoned arguments
- Rebutts the other side's case
- Outlines the strengths of their side's witnesses and the weaknesses of the other side's witnesses
- Reviews the relevant exhibits and how they helped the case
- Refers to the jury instructions and applicable laws or statutes and how they support their side's theory

- Revisits the case theory and shows how their side's theory carried through
- Asks for the verdict, including a request for relief, and explains why the verdict is justifiable

WITNESS PERFORMANCE

DIRECT EXAMINATION

- Presents an interesting, authentic, factual, and credible portrayal that sounds spontaneous and not memorized
- Understands the facts of the case and the exhibits
- Provides logical testimony
- Plays up the strengths of his/her statements and adequately explains the weaknesses
- Avoids using or needing the witness statement to refresh recollection
- Maintains a consistent character
- Does not provide any answers that include any unfair extrapolations

CROSS EXAMINATION

- Understands the facts of the case and the exhibits
- Provides logical testimony that does not contradict testimony given during direct examination
- Remains confident and poised when responding to unanticipated questions
- Plays up the strengths of their statements and adequately explains the weaknesses
- Controls the narrative in a way that minimizes impeachment without appearing evasive
- Avoids using or needing the witness statement to refresh recollection
- Maintains a consistent character
- Does not provide any answers that include any unfair extrapolations
- Does not give excessively long or non-responsive answers, especially in an effort to run down the clock for the opposing team

SCALE JUDGES USE WHEN SCORING TEAMS

Score	Attorneys	Witnesses
<i>Superior</i> (9 – 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior understanding of the case materials, legal issues, and trial procedures • Extremely persuasive and articulate delivery made without the use of notes or a script • Takes command of the courtroom • Thinks well on his/her feet and responds to the other team’s presentation • Very compelling questions and presentation that move the case forward • Superior use of and response to objections at appropriate times and superior recovery after objection rulings • Always maintains eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Always speaks in a clear, audible, and confident voice • Never asks questions that require an unfair extrapolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior understanding of witness statements and exhibits • Offers a very convincing, credible, and compelling performance • Responses to questions are thorough, accurate, and persuasive and seem natural and not scripted • Does not provide answers that embellish the facts, go outside the scope of the case materials, or offer new facts • Provides very responsible answers during cross examination and does not filibuster or obstruct the questioning attorney • Maintains eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Speaks in a clear, audible, and confident voice
<i>Excellent</i> (7 – 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent understanding of the case materials, legal issues, and trial procedures • Very persuasive and articulate delivery made without the use of notes or a script • Mostly takes command of the courtroom • Mostly thinks well on his/her feet and responds to the other team’s presentation • Compelling questions and presentation that mostly move the case forward • Excellent use of and response to objections at appropriate times and superior recovery after objection rulings • Almost always maintains eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Almost always speaks in a clear, audible, and confident voice • Never asks questions that require an unfair extrapolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent understanding of witness statements and exhibits • Offers a mostly convincing, credible, and compelling performance • Responses to questions are mostly accurate, and persuasive and mostly seem natural and not scripted • Rarely provides answers that embellish the facts, go outside the scope of the case materials, or offers new facts • Provides mostly responsible answers during cross examination and attempts to avoid filibuster or obstruct the questioning attorney • Mostly maintains eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Mostly speaks in a clear, audible, and confident voice

Scoring Guidelines

Score	Attorneys	Witnesses
<p><i>Average</i> (5 – 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly understands the case materials, legal issues, and trial procedures • Somewhat persuasive and articulate delivery made and/or occasionally uses notes or a script • Sometimes takes command of the courtroom • Sometimes thinks well on his/her feet and may not respond to the other team’s presentation • Some stumbles in questions and presentation that may not always move the case forward • Misses some opportunities to use or respond to objections and sometimes struggles to recover after objection rulings • Sometimes forgets to maintain eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Sometimes speaks in a quiet, inaudible, or halting voice • Asks no more than one question that requires an unfair extrapolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of witness statements and exhibits • Offers a somewhat convincing, credible, and compelling performance • Responses to questions are not always accurate, and persuasive and sometimes seem stiff or scripted • Sometimes provides answers that embellish the facts, go outside the scope of the case materials, or offers new facts • Offers some answers during cross examination that are not fully accurate or may attempt to filibuster or obstruct the questioning attorney • Sometimes forgets to maintain eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Sometimes speaks in an inaudible or shaky voice
<p><i>Fair</i> (3 – 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles to understand the case materials, legal issues, and trial procedures • Not very persuasive or articulate delivery made and/or often uses notes or a script • Rarely takes command of the courtroom • Rarely thinks well on his/her feet and minimally responsive to the other team’s presentation • Mostly stumbles in questions and presentation that don’t often move the case forward • Misses many opportunities to use or respond to objections and often struggles to recover after objection rulings • Often forgets to maintain eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Often speaks in a quiet, inaudible, or halting voice • Often asks questions that embellish the facts or require an unfair extrapolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles to understand the witness statements and exhibits • Offers a performance that sometimes feels unrealistic • Responses to questions are generic and sometimes seem memorized or scripted • Often provides answers that are not consistent with the facts or go outside the scope of the case materials • Offers inaccurate answers during cross examination and sometimes attempts to filibuster or obstruct the questioning attorney • Often forgets to maintain eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Often speaks in an inaudible or shaky voice

Scoring Guidelines

Score	Attorneys	Witnesses
<p><i>Ineffective</i> (2 – 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not understand the case materials, legal issues, or trial procedures • Not prepared for trial and/or always uses notes or a script • Does not takes command of the courtroom • Does not thinks well on his/her feet and is not responsive to the other team’s presentation • Always stumbles in questions and presentation fails to move the case forward • Does not make or respond to objections and does not understand how to recover after objection rulings • Does not maintain eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Speaks in a quiet, inaudible, or halting voice • Asks questions intended to elicit an unfair extrapolation • Disruptive or disrespectful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No understanding of the witness statements and exhibits • Does not provide a credible or convincing performance • Responses to questions are not thorough or accurate and are clearly scripted • Provides answers that are not consistent with the facts and go outside the scope of the case materials • Offers inaccurate answers during cross examination and often attempts to filibuster or obstruct the questioning attorney • Forgets to maintain eye contact with judges, jurors, and witnesses • Speaks in an inaudible or shaky voice • Disruptive or disrespectful



PRACTICE SCORE SHEET

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate each team's performance in each of the 14 scoring categories.

Ineffective	Fair	Average	Excellent	Superior
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10

DO NOT: 1) Leave any categories blank; 2) Give any scores of zero; 3) Award fractional points; 4) Allow for a tied score

		P			D
Opening Statement			Opening Statement		
Plaintiff Case					
<i>First Plaintiff Witness</i>	Direct Examination		Cross Examination		
	Witness Performance (Direct)				
	Witness Performance (Cross)				
<i>Second Plaintiff Witness</i>	Direct Examination		Cross Examination		
	Witness Performance (Direct)				
	Witness Performance (Cross)				
<i>Third Plaintiff Witness</i>	Direct Examination		Cross Examination		
	Witness Performance (Direct)				
	Witness Performance (Cross)				
Defense Case					
Cross Examination			<i>First Defense Witness</i>	Direct Examination	
				Witness Performance (Direct)	
				Witness Performance (Cross)	
Cross Examination			<i>Second Defense Witness</i>	Direct Examination	
				Witness Performance (Direct)	
				Witness Performance (Cross)	
Cross Examination			<i>Third Defense Witness</i>	Direct Examination	
				Witness Performance (Direct)	
				Witness Performance (Cross)	
Closing Arguments			Closing Arguments		
TOTAL PLAINTIFF SCORE			TOTAL DEFENSE SCORE		