2026 Yale Bulldog Invitational

Updated July 15th, 2026

Yale Bulldog Invitational Rules of Competition

Note: The Yale Bulldog Mock Trial Invitational is governed by the Bulldog Invitational Rules of Competition and the Harkness Rules of Evidence (HRE). If you have any questions regarding clarification of rules or case materials, please send an email to the YMTA Tournament Director of Logistics, Aida Saake, at tournaments@ymtabulldogs.com. Any dispute arising from these rules during the tournament will be resolved by a Tournament Director or the Presidents of the YMTA. All decisions made by the Tournament Directors or the Presidents are final.

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Article I: Administration

Rule 1.1: Rules and Scope

All trials will be governed by the Bulldog Invitational Rules of Competition and the Harkness Rules of Evidence. Questions or interpretations of these rules are within the discretion of the Tournament Directors and Presidents of the Yale Mock Trial Association (herein "YMTA"). All decisions made by the Tournament Directors and Presidents regarding these rules are final.

Rule 1.2: Code of Conduct

The Bulldog Invitational Rules of Competition must be followed by all coaches, competitors, and spectators. Professional, collegial, and ethical behavior is always expected.

The YMTA possesses discretion to impose sanctions, including but not limited to disqualification, point deductions, loss of ballots, or expulsion from competition for any misconduct occurring while a team is present for the invitational. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Disparaging contents based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected class.
- Failure to treat fellow participants, schools, teams, or judges with respect.
- Damage to Yale Buildings or property.
- Dishonesty in any matter related to the tournament.
- Illegal or reckless conduct of any sort.
- Deliberate failure to follow the instructions given by tournament officials.

Article II: Teams

Rule 2.1: Student Eligibility

An eligible student is a student enrolled in a United States high school, foreign secondary school, or homeschool organization who has not yet received a high school or secondary school diploma.

Rule 2.2: School Eligibility

Each team may consist only of eligible students from a single high school (A United States high school, foreign secondary school, or homeschool organization). In order to be eligible for application, a school must have a good faith belief that they will be able to field a team of at least six students on the relevant tournament dates, and that they will be able to pay the registration fees for every student they register.

Rule 2.3: Team Composition

A team must be composed of at least six eligible students.

Rule 2.4: Use of Ineligible Team Members

Any team that knowingly uses an ineligible person as a member will be subject to sanctions. Challenges alleging ineligibility of a competitor must be made to a Tournament Director or the Presidents; eligibility challenges shall not be made to a judge, or during trial functions.

Rule 2.5: Payment of Fees

The fee for each participating student in the Bulldog Invitational will be specified by the tournament directors prior to the tournament. Each school must pay all student registration fees by the date specified by the tournament directors upon registration. Schools that fail to pay all registration fees by that date must pay a $100 late payment fee. Failure to pay all registration fees by the beginning of opening ceremonies will result in immediate disqualification from the tournament. All registration fees submitted according to Rule 2.5 are non-refundable.

Rule 2.6: Rosters

Each team shall submit a form with the names of all competing students and contact information for coaches, captains, or adult chaperones according to a deadline set and communicated by the Tournament Directors.. Teams will submit timely updates if there are any changes after it is submitted.

On this form there will be a section for the "official competition roster." All students whose names are on the official roster will be considered rostered team members regardless of whether they are competing in that round (i.e., a student is still a rostered team member for a team even if that student only competes on Defense and the team is competing in the Prosecution/Plaintiff). If a school brings two teams to the tournament, they must designate which team each student from their school is a part of. A student may be listed on only one team roster for the tournament. Unless given express permission by tournament staff, a student may not change which team's roster they are on after the start of opening ceremonies.

Rule 2.7: Student Timekeepers

(a) **Providing a Timekeeper.** Each team is expected to supply a timekeeper for each trial. The timekeeper shall be a person who is named on the official team roster. Coaches and non-rostered spectators may not timekeep. If a team only has six students rostered (and so all students are performing as either attorneys or witnesses in every trial), then the witnesses for that team may take turns serving as timekeeper when they are not actively competing.

(b) **Timekeeper Duties.** Each timekeeper shall accurately monitor the time remaining during all portions of the trial using the time limits outlined in Rule 3.9. The timekeeper may unobtrusively indicate to their team the amount of used or remaining time through the use of written timecards or hand signals but should not give verbal time warnings unless explicitly asked for a time check. The timekeeper shall announce aloud to the court when the time for any part of the trial has expired. After the trial has ended, the timekeepers are responsible for taking the blue scoring ballots to the tabulation room to be checked and

then returning to the trial rooms to indicate either that the judges need to complete a portion of the ballots or that the ballots have been filled out correctly. If the Tournament Directors opt to use a digital balloting program such as Tabeasy, that will not be necessary and the timekeepers shall remain in the trial room with the rest of their team until they have been given the final All Clear.

(c) **Discrepancies.** Timekeepers for opposing teams shall cooperate to ensure accurate timekeeping. If there is a discrepancy of more than 15 seconds between the two timekeepers, the timekeepers should notify the presiding judge at the end of the examination, and the judge may decide how much time is remaining based upon the timekeepers' calculations.

Rule 2.8: Bye-Buster Teams

Should an odd number of teams be competing at the Invitational, a Bye-Buster team will be formed. As outlined in Article 4, the Bye-Buster team will always be placed against the bottom ranked team. Everyone accompanying a team to a tournament, including alternate team members not competing in the immediate round, timekeepers, and spectators may be required to serve on a Bye Buster team at the discretion of the Tournament Directors. Students may not compete on the Bye Buster against their own school. Should a school with alternates refuse to supply personnel for a Bye Buster team upon the request of the Tournament Directors, the Tournament Directors shall have the right to void all ballots won by that team during the round in which they refused to provide members for the Bye-Buster. The Bye-Buster team is not eligible for team awards, and individuals who compete on the Bye-Buster are not eligible for individual awards.

Rule 2.9: Team Identification

No team shall identify themselves by school or state to a judge until scores for the round have been submitted and teams have been given the final All Clear from the Tournament Directors. No spectators or team members for any team should wear any items of clothing which identify their school or state or carry any other items that might be visible to the judges which would identify their school or state**.**

Article III: Trials

Rule 3.1: The Case Problem

The problem will be a fact pattern selected or written for the tournament by the Tournament Directors. Stipulations and pretrial orders provided in the case packet may not be disputed at trial. Witness statements may not be altered. The problem shall consist of three witnesses per side, all of whom shall have names and characteristics that would allow them to be played by any competing student regardless of race, gender, etc. All three of the witnesses on each side of the case must be called in each trial.

Rule 3.2: Team Duties

The six competing members of each must divide their duties as follows during each trial:

(a) **Witness Roles.** Three students will portray witnesses. Each of the three student witnesses must portray one witness and no more than one witness. Each team must call all three of its assigned witnesses. Witnesses must be called only by their own team during their case-in-chief and must be examined by both sides. Witnesses may not be recalled by either side.

(b) **Attorney Roles.** Three students will portray attorneys. No student may be both a witness and an attorney in the same trial. Each attorney will perform one direct and one cross examination. No student may perform more than one direct or more than one cross examination during a trial. One attorney will give the opening statement. One attorney will give the closing argument. The same student may not give both the opening statement and the closing argument. The attorney who conducts the direct examination of a particular witness will be the only person permitted to make objections during the cross examination of that witness, and the attorney who cross-examines a witness will be the only person permitted to make objections during the direct examination of that witness.

Rule 3.3: Invention of Fact

(a) **Improper Invention** Mock trial competitors are reminded that they are to argue the case based on the facts provided. Teams must rely on the facts stated in the case problem or

facts reasonably inferable from the case problem, rather than creating new facts or denying existing facts in order to advantage their side. It is inappropriate for a team to invent a material fact on direct or redirect examination—this is an "improper invention."

(i) **Material Facts.** Teams should note that a material fact is one that affects the merits of the case and is significant enough that it might be something one would want to use in a closing argument. It is not inappropriate to invent an immaterial fact (facts invented to develop a character or to provide background are allowed and, indeed, encouraged).

(ii) **Cross Examination.** Teams should also note that there is no such thing as improper invention on cross examination. The witnesses' only obligation on cross is to remain consistent with their statement and to be responsive to the attorney's questions. Attorneys who ask questions that they do not know the answer to are taking a risk and must deal with the consequences.

(b) **In Trial Remedies for Improper Invention**. There is no "Improper Invention" or "Unfair Extrapolation" objection at this tournament. The only in-trial remedy for improper invention is impeachment using the witness's affidavit (either by omission or by contradiction). Judges will be instructed to penalize a witness who they believe has been effectively impeached or to increase the score of the impeaching attorney for an effective impeachment when they believe an effective impeachment has occurred. No team will attempt to object based on improper invention or ask the trial judge to rule on whether an improper invention has occurred.

(c) **Post-Trial Remedies for Improper Invention**. If a team believes that another team has made an egregious Improper Invention, it may report that allegation to the Tournament Director within 30 minutes of the end of the trial in which the alleged invention took place. The Tournament Director will speak with both teams present in the trial (and, if possible, the judge of that trial) to determine whether an egregious Improper Invention took place. If the Tournament Director believes an egregious Improper Invention took place, they may issue sanctions pursuant to Article 6. Teams seeking post-trial remedy for Improper Invention should note that the Tournament Director has a high bar for Improper

Inventions that warrant sanctions.

(i) **Egregious Improper Invention.** An Improper Invention is egregious if it is (1) so material as to be the kind of fact that could change the verdict of a real trial and (2) the kind of fact that cannot be effectively remedied by impeachment. For example, suppose an expert witness's affidavit indicates that they were called in after the case was filed in order to review the evidence and provide an expert report. If that witness declares on the stand that they were, in fact, also an eyewitness to the case and that the report they submitted was only intended as a summary of their *expert* conclusions— and not their eyewitness testimony—then the Tournament Director will likely issue sanctions.

Rule 3.4: Extrinsic Legal Authority

No team shall rely upon, cite, or invoke any legal code, statute, ruling, doctrine, law, or judicial opinion during trial, unless it is expressly included in the case materials or rules of evidence in use at the tournament.

Rule 3.5: Extrinsic Documents and Demonstrative Aids

(a) No team shall enter evidence, show to the jury, or present to the judge any documents not included in the case materials, rules of evidence, or rules of competition, even for demonstrative purposes.

(b) No documents from the case packet, rules of evidence or rules of competition may be altered or marked in any way prior to trial.

(c) No illustrative aids of any kind may be used unless provided in the case packet.

(d) No enlargements of the case materials will be permitted.

(e) Absolutely no props are permitted unless expressly included in the case packet.

(i) Definition of a prop: any movable, physical object a competing member handles or interacts with in order to advance a narrative.

Rule 3.6: Final Versions

Unless expressly indicated otherwise in the case materials, all documents contained

within the case materials are the final versions. There may be no suggestion by either team that this is not the case. Revision dates in the case materials are for administrative purposes only and may not be referred to by either team during trial.

Rule 3.7: Physical Characteristics of Witnesses

The YMTA shall endeavor to ensure that all witnesses in the case problem shall have names and characteristics that would allow them to be played by any competing student regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, physical characteristics, etc. No student shall attempt to question the witness on the basis of the race, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, or physical characteristics of the student portraying the witness. If a student portraying a witness has any sort of physical infirmity or disability that would prevent them from performing any of the acts attributed to their character in the case materials, it is to be assumed that the physical infirmity or disability was acquired after the events described in the case materials.

Rule 3.8: Trial Sequence

The trial shall proceed as follows:

(a) **All Clear:** At the beginning of each trial the teams will receive an "All Clear" from a YMTA representative indicating that all judges have been assigned to rooms and there are no conflicts. The trial should not begin until the "All Clear" has been received.

(b) **Preliminary Matters and Introductions:** The judge shall allow a brief time for the teams to introduce themselves (though, of course, not by school) and address any housekeeping matters necessary (e.g., offering courtesy copies of legal documents for judicial reference or asking the judge's preference on courtroom etiquette and procedure). Preliminary matters are not timed, but judges will be instructed to keep them brief.

(c) **Opening Statements:** The Plaintiff/Prosecution will make its opening statement first followed by the Defense. The Defense may not opt to reserve its opening statement until after the plaintiff's case in chief.

(d) **Plaintiff/Prosecution Case in Chief:** The Plaintiff/Prosecution will call its three

witnesses and perform direct examinations of those witnesses. After each direct examination, the Defense will have the opportunity for cross-examination. There is no limit to the number of redirects and recrosses, but no witness may be recalled after they are excused.

(e) **Break:** The judge shall, at the discretion of the teams, permit a short break, traditionally five or ten minutes, in between the cases in chief. The teams may opt to waive trial break if they feel they are getting too close to all loss (see Rule 3.9).

(f) **Defense Case in Chief:** The Defense will call its three witnesses and perform direct examinations of those witnesses. After each direct examination, the Plaintiff/ Prosecution will have the opportunity for cross-examination. There is no limit to the number of redirects and recrosses, but no witness may be recalled after they are excused.

(g) **Break:** The judge shall, at the discretion of the teams, permit a short break, traditionally five or ten minutes, before closing arguments. The teams may opt to waive trial break if they feel they are getting too close to all loss (see Rule 3.9).

(h) **Closing Arguments:** The Plaintiff/Prosecution will make its closing argument first, followed by the Defense. The Plaintiff/Prosecution will then have the opportunity to use any time they have remaining from their closing argument (see Rule 3.9) to give a rebuttal. The Plaintiff/ Prosecution need not explicitly reserve time for this rebuttal; they may use any and all time they have left following their closing argument. The defense is not allowed a rebuttal.

(i) **Commentary:** After the conclusion of the closing arguments, the timekeepers should take the blue ballots to the tabulation room to be checked. Once the blue ballots have been removed from the room, the judges may give brief commentary to the teams. No judges or teams should leave the room until the timekeepers have returned and indicated that there are no problems with the ballots. No team should identify themselves by school or home state until the timekeepers have returned and indicated that there are no problems with the ballots.

Rule 3.9: Time Limits

(a) **Time Limits for Individual Trial Functions:**

The above trial functions shall be timed as follows:

- Opening Statements: 5 minutes per side
- Direct Examinations: 25 minutes per side for all three witnesses combined
- Cross Examinations: 20 minutes per side for all three witnesses combined
- Closing Arguments: 5 minutes per side (Plaintiff has 5 minutes for closing and rebuttal combined and may choose to allocate this time in any manner they wish)

(b) **Expired Time:** If time expires during opening statements or closing arguments, the attorney must stop speaking immediately. If time expires during direct examination, both the attorney and the witness must stop speaking immediately. If the time expires during cross examination, the attorney must stop speaking, but a witness who has begun an answer may finish it (provided they stay responsive to the question asked). If direct examination time expires before a witness takes the stand, then that witness and the attorney directing that witness will both receive a score of 0. The cross-examining attorney may choose to cross examine the witness or not. If the cross-examining attorney elects to cross-examine the witness, the cross-examining attorney will receive a score for cross examination and the witness will take the stand and receive a score for cross examination. No redirect will be allowed. If the cross-examining attorney elects not to cross-examine the witness, both the witness and the cross-examining attorney will receive a score of 0. If cross examination time expires before an attorney begins their cross examination, that attorney will receive a score of 0 for their cross examination. The witness who they would have cross-examined will receive a cross examination score identical to their score on direct.

(c) **Untimed Activities:** Time spent on objections or while the judge is speaking will not count towards the time limits for either side for the purposes of Rule 3.9(a). The timekeepers should stop their clocks as soon as the attorney begins to object or the judge begins to speak; the clock should restart as soon as examination begins again. The judges will be instructed that they should not attempt to interject or question witnesses, but

should they do so, the time spent by the witness answering the judge's question will also be considered untimed provided that the witness's response stays responsive to the judge's question. Preliminary matters and breaks are also not timed for the purposes of Rule 3.9(a).

(d) **All Loss:** All trials must be completed within three hours or both teams will be penalized by losing one ballot from their final record.

(i) **All Loss Time:** The "All Loss Time" will be three hours after the last trial room has received the all clear. The All Loss Time will be clearly stated by the YMTA representative who gives the All Clear at the beginning of the round and will be posted in the hallways promptly after the start of each round.

(ii) **Trials Must Be Completed:** All trials must be completed by the All Loss Time. A trial is deemed completed when the Plaintiff/Prosecution attorney stops speaking for rebuttal (or when the defense attorney stops speaking for closing if the plaintiff has elected not to give a rebuttal). If teams choose to forgo closings (see Rule 3.9(d)(iv)) as a result of approaching all loss, then the trial will be deemed completed when the students stop speaking at the conclusion of the last part the teams have elected to perform.

(iii) **Penalty:** If a trial has not been completed by the All Loss Time, both teams competing in that trial shall have one ballot subtracted from their final ballot total.

(iv) **Duties of Teams:** It is the duty of the teams competing in the trial to ensure that the trial does not go on past all loss. If necessary, teams may need to forgo breaks, shorten their examinations, or shorten closing statements to ensure that they do not run the trial past all loss. If examinations or closings must be shortened, the teams should endeavor to shorten each team's portions of the trial equally (e.g. cut two minutes off of the defense directs, two minutes off of the plaintiff crosses, and shorten each closing to three minutes). If a trial is running close to all loss (within 5 minutes), the teams should instruct the presiding judge to write down the time that the trial ended on the top of his or her ballot and sign it to certify that the trial did not go past the all loss time.

(v) **Intervention:** If the teams believe that the trial is going to go past all loss due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., the presiding judge speaking at length at inappropriate times, one or more judges taking an excessive time to return from trial break, or a student becoming ill during trial), the teams may send representatives to the tabulation room to ask for intervention. The Tournament Directors will attempt to remedy the situation by instructing the judges to change their behavior and/or by extending the All Loss Time for that particular trial.

(vi) **Unperformed Parts:** If students elect not to perform parts as a result of approaching all loss, all unperformed parts shall receive a score of 0.

Rule 3.10: In Trial Communication:

In any trial, after the initial All Clear and until all ballots have been submitted, no student on a team's roster (as defined in Rule 2.6) may communicate with anyone who is not on that team's roster. This includes but is not limited to: other students from their school who are not on the official roster, other teams at the tournament who are not part of their trial, spectators, family members, and coaches. This rule does not apply to communications with judges or representatives of the YMTA. Rostered students may communicate with other students on their roster at any time.

Rule 3.11: Use of Electronic Devices:

Except for electronic time pieces used by timekeepers and cameras to record rounds, students on a team's roster (as defined in Rule 2.6) may not use any electronic devices during rounds (including during trial break). No time pieces or cameras may be used by rostered students for any form of communication with any non-rostered individual. Cell phones, tablets, laptops or other wireless communication devices may not be used for any reason by any rostered student competing in the round.

Pursuant to Rule 2.6, a student is considered rostered if their name is on the official roster, even if they are not performing any roles in a given round. Students who are rostered but not performing any roles are still prohibited from use of electronic devices.

Rule 3.12: Viewing a Trial:

Team members, alternates, coaches, teachers, family members, spectators, and any other persons directly associated with a mock trial team are not allowed to view trials other than the ones involving the team with which they are affiliated while their team remains in the competition.

Rule 3.13: Videotaping and Recording by the YMTA:

By registering to compete at the Bulldog invitational, each student, by default, grants the YMTA the right to photograph or videotape their performance and use it for any mock trial related purpose, including promotional materials. If a student or team does not wish to be photographed or recorded, that student or team must notify the Tournament Directors in writing prior to the start of opening ceremonies.

Rule 3.14: Videotaping and Recording by Other Parties:

Any school competing at the Bulldog Invitational may film any trial of which they are a part unless otherwise notified by YMTA representatives. If a school decides to record a trial, they are required to make the recording available to the other school competing in that trial. Recordings of trials at the Bulldog Invitational may be made only for the educational purposes of the school making the recording. Schools may not share recordings of trials with other schools not involved in the trial. Schools may not publicize the recordings of trials at the Bulldog Invitational or put them online in ways that are available to the public (e.g., YouTube). No party who is not affiliated with either the schools competing in a trial or with the YMTA may record a trial.

If a student or team does not wish to be photographed or recorded, that student or team must notify the Tournament Directors in writing prior to the start of opening ceremonies, and the YMTA will endeavor to notify the teams competing against them that they may not film in those rounds.

Rule 3.15: Swearing in of Witnesses:

All witnesses are presumed to be constructively sworn in prior to their taking the stand. Witnesses need not be sworn in during trial.

Rule 3.16: Sequestration of Witnesses:

All witnesses except for party representatives may be constructively sequestered during preliminary matters by the invocation of Harkness Rules of Evidence 615. Students portraying these witnesses are not required to leave the room during trial, but, for the purpose of their testimony, they are presumed to be absent from the courtroom when not testifying.

Rule 3.17: Costuming:

(a) Definition of a costume: clothing and accessories worn by competing members to define their witness's image or character.

  (i) Teams should not misconstrue "accessories" to include props. (See Rule 3.5.e.i) Accessories such as some hats, jewelry, etc. are appropriate and permitted; accessories that could be utilized as props, including but not limited to handcuffs, beakers, cups, etc. are not.

  (ii) If teams have questions regarding whether a particular item would constitute a prop or a piece of a costume, they should contact the Tournament Directors at tournaments@ymtabulldogs.com at least one week prior to the tournament date to receive clarification.

(b) There is no rule against costuming of witnesses at the Bulldog Invitational. The YMTA will not police what students wear to trial, assuming it is court appropriate.

Rule 3.18: Objections:

(a) **When objections are permitted.** Objections are permitted during examinations of witnesses. Objections may not be made *during* opening statements or closing arguments but may be made *to* opening statements or closing arguments after the conclusion of the statement or argument.

(b) **Permitted objections.** The only objections that are permitted are objections pursuant to the Harkness Rules of Evidence or pursuant to the case law, pretrial rulings, or other instructions provided in the case materials.

Rule 3.19: Permitted Motions:

The only permitted motions are motions to enter evidence, motions to strike testimony or evidence, and motions to constructively sequester witnesses pursuant to Harkness Rule of Evidence 615.

Rule 3.20: Voir Dire:

Voir Dire is permitted and shall count towards the cross-examination time of the team choosing to voir dire.

Rule 3.21: Authenticity of Documents and Signatures:

Unless there is express indication in the case packet that a document may not be authentic, no witness may deny that a document contained within the case packet is authentic. Unless there is express indication in the case packet to the contrary, no witness may deny that a document which purports to bear their signature was signed by them. If a witness indicates in their affidavit, deposition, or report that they are familiar with a document in the case materials, they must acknowledge, if asked, that they are familiar with that document as it appears in the case materials.

Rule 3.22: Black and White Copies:

Unless otherwise indicated, teams may always use either black-and-white or color copies of the case materials. No objection may be raised on grounds that a document which was in color in the case packet is printed in black-and-white. No witness may fail to authenticate a document on grounds that it is in black-and-white.

Rule 3.23: Notes:

Attorneys are permitted to use notes at any point during the trial, though judges may take this into consideration when scoring teams. Witnesses may not use notes while on the stand, unless they are competing on a Bye-Buster team, in which case they may use notes. Witnesses may review notes while waiting to be called to the stand.

Rule 3.24: Emergencies:

In the case of an emergency (as determined by the presiding judge), the judge will have the power to adjourn the trial for a short time to address the emergency. If the emergency adjournment results in the trial going long, representatives should be sent to the tabulation room to address all loss issues.

Should a team member, as a result of an emergency, be unable to continue competing in the trial, another student may be substituted in for the duration of that trial. In order of preference, this student should be (a) any other student on the roster of the affected team, (b) any other student on the roster of any other team competing in the invitational who is willing to assist.

Article IV: Tabulation

Rule 4.1: Definitions:

- **Ballot Wins:** The number of ballots which a team has won. A team wins a ballot when it achieves a higher total number of points on that ballot than its opponent. A team that wins a ballot receives one "win," a team that loses a ballot receives no "wins," and a team that ties a ballot (i.e. both teams have an equal number of points) receives one half "win."
- **Combined Strength (CS):** The sum of the wins earned by a team's opponents.
- **Opponents' Combined Strength (OCS):** The sum of the CSs of a team's opponents.
- **Point Differential (PD):** The difference in points earned by a team and their opponent on each ballot is the ballot differential. The Point Differential is the sum of the ballot differentials on all ballots for that team.

Rule 4.2: Scoring:

Students will be scored on each performed part (Opening Statement, Three Attorney Scores on Direct Examination, Three Witness Scores on Direct Examination, Three Attorney Scores on Cross Examination, Three Witness Scores on Cross Examination, and Closing Argument). Each part will be scored on a 1-10 scale. Judges will be instructed to make meaningful differentiation in their scores between different qualities of performance. Each judge will have a blue scoring ballot on which they will record their scores, or each judge will have a virtual ballot if the Tournament Directors opt to use a virtual tabulation system such as Tabeasy.

Rule 4.3: Pairings:

(a) **Post-Round Rankings.** After rounds 1-3, teams will be ranked by Wins, then CS, then PD, then a coin flip.

  (i) **Exception For the Bye-Buster:** The Bye-Buster is not ranked based on its running record.

(b) **Round 1 Pairings.** Pairings for Round 1 will be random.

(c) **Rounds 2 and 4 Pairings.** After Round 1, the teams that played Prosecution/Plaintiff in

Round 1 will be ranked and the teams that played Defense in Round 1 will be ranked separately. All teams will switch sides for Round 2. The top Prosecution/Plaintiff team will play the top Defense team, the second ranked Prosecution/Plaintiff team will play the second ranked Defense team and so on.

(d) **Round 3 Pairings.** After Round 2, all teams will be ranked. The top ranked team will play the second, the third team will play the fourth and so on. The rounds will alternate whether the higher ranked team plays Prosecution/Plaintiff or Defense (e.g. If in the top round, the first ranked team plays P and the second ranked team plays D, then the third ranked team will play D and the fourth ranked team will play P). The sides for the top round will be determined by a coin flip.

(e) **Impermissible Matches.** Teams may not face a team they have already played, and they may not face a team from the same school. Should the pairing methods above result in an impermissible match, the tabulation director will swap teams with the least difference in record in order to resolve the impermissible match.

Rule 4.4: Final Rankings:

After round 4, the teams will be ranked according to the following criteria in the following order of significance:

1. Wins
2. CS
3. OCS
4. PD
5. PD after dropping each team's most and least favorable ballot
6. PD after dropping each team's two most and two least favorable ballots
7. PD after dropping each team's three most and three least favorable ballots
8. Total points earned
9. Total points earned after dropping each team's most and least favorable ballot
10. Total points earned after dropping each team's two most and two least favorable ballots
11. Total points earned after dropping each team's three most and three least favorable ballots

12. Co-placement declared (The YMTA will procure an extra trophy if necessary)

(a) **Head-To-Head Exception.** If at any level of tie breaking, two and only two teams are tied and those two teams played each-other during the tournament, and one of those teams won that round either by taking both ballots or by taking one ballot and tying the other, then that team shall be declared the winner of the tie breaker.

Rule 4.5: Individual Awards:

(a) **Judge Ranking.** At the bottom of the scoring ballot, each judge will be asked to rank the top four attorneys and the top four witnesses in each round.

(b) **Point Allocation.** The top ranked attorney/witness on a ballot will receive 5 points. The second ranked attorney/witness will receive 4 points. The third ranked attorney/witness will receive 3 points. The fourth ranked attorney/witness will receive 2 points. Thus the maximum number of points an individual can earn on one side of the case is 20 (5 ranks x 4 ballots).

(c) **Awards.** Awards will be given to the competitors who earned the most rank points on a single side of the case in a single role.

Note: An individual's ranks are separated by side of the case (e.g. An individual would be considered to have 14 ranks on the Prosecution/Plaintiff and 16 on the Defense rather than just 30 ranks total). They are also separated by attorney vs. witness. Thus, in order to win an award a competitor must play both rounds on the same side of the case in the same role. Students who play a witness on one side of the case and an attorney on the other are eligible for awards in both roles.

(d) **Ties.** Ties will not be broken for individual awards (e.g. if one attorney with 16 ranks earns an award, all of the attorneys with 16 ranks earn awards).

Rule 4.6: Accommodations:

Should a team or part of a team be required to miss one day of the tournament for religious or similar reasons, the following procedures will be followed:

(a) **Accommodation Options:**

(i) **Sub teams:** A team of nine or more students may compete on only one day by splitting into two sub-teams, one playing Plaintiff/Prosecution both rounds and one playing Defense both rounds. This will allow the team to compete in four rounds total. The scores of the two sub teams will be added together to produce the team's final record.

(1) **Allocation of Students onto Sub-Teams.** If the team has twelve students, six will compete on each sub team. If the team has fewer than twelve students, up to three students may serve on both sub-teams. Students serving on more than one sub-team must portray witnesses on both sub-teams.

(2) **Tabulation Adjustments for Sub-Teams.** If the team will only be present on Sunday, both sub-teams will be paired randomly in the first round, and then ranked as per usual procedure for the second round. Sub-teams will be ranked separately. If the team will only be present on Saturday, both sub teams will be paired as though they were the median team in round 3, and then ranked based on a score of triple what was earned in round 3 for round 4. At the end of the tournament, the scores of the sub teams will be added together to create the final team score.

(ii) **Same Side Days.** A team on which only a small portion of its members are unable to attend one day may opt to play one side of the case twice in one day and then the other side twice the next day (e.g. if two members who play on the defense side of the case will be absent on Saturday, the team will be assigned to play Plaintiff/Prosecution twice on Saturday and Defense twice on Sunday.)

(1) **Allocation of Students Onto Sides.** All students who must be absent on a given day must be assigned to the side of the case that will not be played that day. Students who will need to be absent on one day may not play both sides of the case.

(2) **Tabulation Adjustments for Same Side Days.** Teams with same side days will be ranked per usual tabulation guidelines, but placed on the side

of the case on which they need to compete. If there is an odd number of teams with same-side days, one other team will be assigned to compete with same side days (in order to balance rounds two and 4). The YMTA will seek volunteers for this extra team, and if no volunteers are to be found, a random team will be selected.

(b) **When Accommodations Will be Offered:** Because accommodations place a burden on the resources of the YMTA, and can, in principle affect other teams, we will only offer accommodations to teams that can demonstrate a genuine need for accommodation for religious or similar reasons. These accommodations are not available to teams who simply find it convenient to not attend on one day.

(c) **Notification:** Teams must notify the YMTA by September 15 to receive accommodations.

Rule 4.7: Tabulation Room Entry:

(a) **Team Representatives** Each team should designate tabulation room representatives (preferably coaches, but students are also allowed). No more than two people per team should be tab representatives.

(b) **Tabulation Period** After each round, there may be a tabulation period in which YMTA representatives will add ballots and set pairings for the next round pursuant to Rule 4.1. During the tabulation period (if there is one), no team members, coaches, spectators, or non-YMTA affiliates will be allowed in the tabulation room except in the case of an emergency or a rules dispute. In the case of a rules dispute, one representative from each involved team will be allowed into the tabulation room to resolve the dispute.

(c) **Review Period** After the tabulation period, there will be a review period. During the review period, a team's tabulation room representatives will be allowed to enter the tabulation room and look at their own ballots, if paper ballots are being used. If the Tournament Directors opt to use a digital tabulation program such as Tabeasy, ballots will be available for teams to view online. Teams may not look at

any other team's ballots. Team tabulation representatives will also be allowed to look at the tabulation cards during the review period. If any mistakes in tabulation are discovered by any team, they will be resolved by YMTA representatives. Because of this provision, pairings for rounds are not final until the end of the review period. Any mistakes which are not addressed during the review period will not be corrected and no remedies for such mistakes will be available.

Article V: Workshops

Rule 5.1: Workshop Assignment:

Teams will be provided with a list of available workshops. Students must sign up for the workshops they intend to attend by the date specified by the tournament directors. Any students or teams who fail to sign up for workshops by that date will be added to workshops as space allows but may not be admitted to their first choice workshop if that workshop has already been filled. Students who wish to switch workshops after the selection date will be allowed to do so up until the start of workshops, but only as space allows.

Rule 5.2: Workshop Conduct:

Students are asked to be respectful of both YMTA workshop leaders and of other students in the workshops. We recognize that there will always be students at varying skill levels in a workshop. Behavior designed to deride or belittle any other student will not be tolerated. Students who violate this rule will be asked to leave workshops. This will be at the discretion of the YMTA workshop leader.

Rule 5.3: Workshop Preparation:

Some workshops may be marked as requiring advance preparation on the part of the students. Students will not be allowed to sign up for these workshops after the selection date. Students will be asked to complete all preparation before the workshops begin. Students who do not complete the preparation may be asked to leave and attend a different workshop that does not require preparation. This will be at the discretion of the YMTA workshop leader.

Article VI: Sanctions and Interventions

Rule 6.1: Reporting Rules Violations:

(a) **Time Frame:** Any rules violations may be reported at any time during the tournament, and sanctions may be imposed at any time. If a reporting team wishes to have a rules violation remedied by sanctions that might affect scoring or win/loss record, they must report it by the end of the review period after the round in which the violation occurred.

(b) **Representatives:** The only individuals who may impose sanctions for rules violations are the Tournament Directors or the Presidents. No team or individual shall be excluded from a round, award, or tournament without a majority decision of the Tournament Directors.

(c) **Standard:** The Tournament Directors shall not impose sanctions unless there is clear and convincing evidence of a rule violation. The Tournament Directors shall abide by a standard of harmless error. The Tournament Directors shall consider in making a determination regarding rules violations the intentions of those accused of violation.

Rule 6.2: Sanctions for Violations in Trial:

The following penalties may be imposed for violations that occur in trial:

- warning, verbal or written
- loss of points (including invalidation of a specific score)
- loss of ballots
- loss of individual awards
- loss of team awards
- exclusion of an individual competitor, coach, or spectator from a round or from the tournament
- disqualification of a team from a tournament.

In general, violations under Article III (unless particularly egregious and deliberate) will result in loss of points or ballots. Egregious and deliberate violations or repeat offenses may result in more severe sanctions. Violations under other articles (particularly Rules 1.2 and 5.2) may be met with more severe sanctions.

Rule 6.3: Requests for Interventions:

(a) **Interventions:** An intervention occurs when a Tournament Director or the Tabulation Director enters a trial room and acts in such a way as to alter the progress of the trial in a material way.

(b) **Available Interventions:** Teams may seek interventions to address the following:

(i) To prevent a trial from going over All Loss time due to conditions beyond the students' control

(ii) To provide clarification of rules or procedures upon request of the judge

(iii) To address a major rules violation by either team or the judge that is likely to affect the remainder of the trial

(iv) To address behavior of a team, spectator, or coach that is disruptive and likely to affect the remainder of the trial

In general, interventions should only be sought to address matters that will continue to affect later parts of the trial. Any other matters can be handled after the trial.

(c) **Time Frame:** Any team seeking intervention must seek it as quickly as possible after an alleged violation or problem occurs. At the latest, interventions should be sought during the next trial break after the issue is identified.

(d) **Who May Seek Interventions:** It is generally preferred that interventions be sought by students. If the intervention seeks to address the behavior of another student, the intervention *must* be sought by a student. However, the YMTA recognizes that when dealing with issues stemming from the behavior of coaches, judges, or other adults, it may be easier for an adult to seek intervention. In this case, an adult representative from a team is permitted to seek intervention.

(e) **Who May Address Intervention Requests:** Only a Tournament Director or the Presidents may intervene.

(f) **Opportunity to be heard:** A Tournament Director or President may dismiss a request for intervention without hearing from representatives from both teams but may not grant it without hearing from both teams. Thus, if a representative from one team wishes to

request an intervention, it is strongly recommended that they be accompanied to the tabulation room by a representative from the other team so that the intervention request may be addressed in a timely manner.

Rule 6.4: Final Decision:

All decisions of Tournament Directors or the President are final regarding sanctions or interventions.

Article VII: Online Trial Rules

Rule 7.1: Applicability of Online Trial Rules:

These rules apply to any Bulldog Invitational that is held online. Insofar as there is any contradiction between rules in Article 7 and rules in other articles of this rulebook, Article 7 controls. Participants should also consult the Virtual Harkness Rules of Evidence.

Rule 7.2: Responsibilities of Hosts and Students:

The Tournament Directors will coordinate all trials via Zoom and provide judges and tabulation. The teams are responsible for providing their own video equipment and their own space in which to conduct their portions of the trials.

Rule 7.3: Attendance via Zoom:

The host will provide Zoom links for all trials prior to the tournament. All individuals who are participating or observing a trial should enter the Zoom courtroom at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start time of the trial.

(a) **Permitted Participants:** All rostered student members of a rostered team may be present in the Zoom room during the trial. The YMTA reserves the right to limit the number of coaches and spectators on the Zoom call and will announce such limitations prior to the tournament.

(b) **Location of Participants:** Students from a rostered team may each join the trial from individual Zoom accounts or a collection of them may join from the same Zoom account. However, at all times, the testifying witness must participate from a different Zoom account and must be in a different room from the examining attorney. Thus, each team must have at least two Zoom accounts (at least one for the attorneys and at least one for the testifying witness). The coaches, if any, may not be in the same room as the students during the trials, and, if they will be watching via Zoom, must use a separate Zoom account.

Rule 7.4: Zoom Naming:

As soon as participants enter the Zoom courtroom, they should change their Zoom names according to the following naming scheme:

(a) **Attorneys:** "(Team Code) P/D - Student Name"

(i) For example, if Zeke McDavid from Team A is competing against McKenna Picton from Team B in Courtroom 3, their Zoom names should be "(A) P – Zeke McDavid" and "(B) D – McKenna Picton." If Mr. McDavid is on Zoom with multiple members of his team, his name should simply be "(A) P Counsel."

(b) **Witnesses:** "(Team Code) P/D - Witness Name (Real Name)"

(i) For example, if Henry Jones from Team A is playing the defendant, his Zoom name should be "(A) D - Drew Cox (Henry Jones)." If he is using the same Zoom account as the other witnesses from his team, they should use "(A) D Witnesses."

(c) **Timekeepers:** "(Team Code) P/D Timekeeper."

(i) For example, if Quinn Moss from Team B is timekeeping for the defense, her Zoom name should be "(B) D Timekeeper." If the timekeeper is in the room with other members of the team, they are not required to have a separately named Zoom account but must have some method of communication with the other timekeeper.

(d) **Alternates:** "(Team Code) P/D Alternates."

(i) For example, if Luke Tyson from Team A is an alternate for the defense, his Zoom name should be "(A) D Alternate." If the alternate is in the room with other members of the team, they are not required to have a separately named Zoom account.

(e) **Tech:** If a team chooses to use an individual Zoom account for screen sharing purposes, that account should be named "P/D Screenshare," "P/D Tech," or something reasonably similar.

(f) **Coaches:** "(Team Code) P/D Coach."

(i) For example, a Team A coach for the defense would have the Zoom name "(A) D Coach."

(g) **Spectators:** If the YMTA permits additional spectators, those individuals should rename themselves "P/D Spectator."

(h) **Pronouns:** The YMTA encourages competing students to add their pronouns to the end of their Zoom name if they are comfortable. Ex: "(A) P – McKenna Picton (she/her)" "() D - Drew Cox (Henry Jones) (he/him)"

Rule 7.5: Video and Audio:

The following rules govern the use of video and audio by participants in each trial.

(a) **Before the All Clear:** Before the All Clear is announced and the round commences, all competing members from both teams should turn their video on so the judges can ensure there are no conflicts. Once the judges have confirmed there are no conflicts, participants may turn their videos off.

(b) **Pretrial Matters:** During introductions, anyone introducing themself or being introduced for the record may have their video and audio on. Additionally, the presiding judge should have their video and audio on as should the attorney handling pretrial for each team. All other participants should have their video and audio muted.

(c) **Opening and Closing Statements:** During opening and closing statements, the only people who should have their video on are the presiding judge and the attorney giving the current opening or closing statement. The presenting attorney should have their audio on. The presiding judge should have their audio muted. All other participants should have their video and audio muted, including the attorney opening or closing for the other side.

(d) **Direct and Cross examination:** During direct and cross examination, the presiding judge will have their video on but will mute their audio except during objections. The witness should always have their video and audio on. The attorney examining the witness should always have their video and audio on. The objecting attorney (i.e., on direct examination the attorney who crosses that witness and on cross examination the attorney who directs that witness) should always have their video on but should mute their audio except during objections. All other participants should have their video and audio muted.

(e) **Time checks:** If a participant requests a time check or if one side runs out of time, the

timekeeper shall unmute their audio in order to respond to the request for timing information or to call time.

(f) **Post-trial comments:** The presiding and scoring judges should turn on their video and audio when giving feedback and all students who participated in that trial should turn on their video and audio.

(g) **Instructions For Judges:** Students may view the trial in any format they choose. Judges will be instructed to view opening and closing statements in speaker view and all other portions of the trial in gallery view. Judges will be instructed to hide all non-video participants. Judges will be instructed to view screen shares in side-by-side mode.

Note: We will do our best to ensure they view the trials as instructed, but teams will not be entitled to relief because a judge chose to view the trial in a different format.

Rule 7.6: Documents, Exhibits, and Demonstrative Aids:

(a) **Access to Documents:** All participants should assume that all other student participants and the presiding judge have a copy of the case in front of them and access to all of the exhibits and case documents. Students need not show opposing counsel documents prior to the admission of those documents. All students must acknowledge that they have access to these documents and can see them on the screen in front of them. Judges will be instructed to penalize students who do not acknowledge that they can pull up an exhibit or who attempt gamesmanship with the time in doing so.

(b) **Publishing Exhibits:** In order to publish exhibits to the jury, students may share their screen. The screen share may be done by any member of the presenting team. Students are reminded that they may only screenshare on documents that they would be permitted to show to the jury at that point in the trial (in other words, exhibits that are already on the record).

(c) **Demonstrative Aids:** The ban on demonstrative aids is modified for the purpose of Zoom trials. Students may use screen-share to present digital demonstrative aids. Any non digital illustrative aids or props are still governed by Rule 3.5. Any demonstrative

aids permitted by this rule are still subject to evidentiary objections.

Rule 7.7: Pretrial Notice:

Students should announce any matters that would otherwise be listed on the pretrial notice form during pretrial matters. As with the pretrial notice form, failure to announce may lead to objections based on failure to notify. As with the pretrial notice form, announcing during pretrial satisfies notice requirements but not any other evidentiary requirements.

Rule 7.8: Roster Forms:

Both teams should prepare a roster document identifying which roles were played by which students from their team during each trial. Teams should be ready to screen share this document at the end of trial to assist judges in filling out the rankings at the bottom of their ballot. Judges may advise students to turn their videos on at the end of the trial for this purpose.

Rule 7.9: Timekeeping:

(a) **Timekeeper communication:** Students from each team should exchange the contact information of their timekeepers. This shall be done using the Zoom chat function. Timekeepers should communicate the time remaining for each element of trial after each performance.

(b) **Calling Time:** If either party runs out of time, the timekeeper may temporarily unmute themselves to inform the judge that time has expired.

Rule 7.10: All Loss:

While students are still strongly encouraged to keep their trials under three hours, the All Loss penalty will not be imposed until three hours and fifteen minutes have elapsed to provide allowance for the possibility of a technical problem that slows the trial.

Rule 7.11: Technical Issues:

Should it become clear that any party is experiencing technical issues (Zoom audio or

video not working or a student losing their connection) the presiding judge may request that time, including All Loss time, be stopped until the issues are resolved. Students should notify the presiding judge if they or a performing teammate are experiencing technical issues. Students should do this verbally as soon as the connection is lost, unless another student is conducting opening or closing statements in which case, they should only notify the judge if they cannot hear the opposing opening or closing.

Rule 7.12: Use of Electronics:

The ban on use of electronics is waived. Students may use any electronic device they wish. However, this does not permit them to communicate with individuals they would not otherwise be permitted to communicate with. Students are still not permitted to communicate with anyone not on their roster (they may not communicate with their coaches during the trial).

Rule 7.13: Rule Violations and Interventions:

Students will be provided with contact information for the tournament directors and presidents prior to the tournament. Should an intervention be necessary during trial, students should contact tabulation staff via text or email. Should any participant wish to report a rule violation, they should contact tabulation staff via text or email, or enter the main Zoom room.

Rule 7.14: Videotaping:

Under any circumstance under which videotaping a non-Zoom trial would be permitted, screen recording a Zoom trial will be permitted.

Rule 7.15: Tabulation:

The virtual tournament will utilize a digital tabulation system such as Tabeasy. Tabeasy will allow teams to see their ballots which contain individual scores for each aspect of the trial, their opponent's scores for each aspect of the trial, and their feedback at the conclusion of each round.

In the event that there are unreconciliable technical issues with the digital tabulation

system, the Tournament Directors will provide each team with a link to a spreadsheet that will allow them to view their scores throughout the tournament. Scores will be added to these spreadsheets once the tabulation room has received and checked them. The Tournament Directors will also send out pictures of the tabulation cards and will be available to answer questions about pairings and rankings. Judges will be asked to fill out feedback boxes on their ballot. The tournament will provide the feedback to the teams after the tournament but may not be able to do so during the tournament.

Rule 7.16: Workshops:

Workshops will be held via Zoom and otherwise will be the same as the in-person counterparts. The YMTA encourages students to keep their Zoom video on during the workshops and unmute to offer questions or comments.