

TIMEKEEPER MANUAL

NHSMTC

2023



NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Welcome to the 2023 National High School Mock Trial Championship! Each competing team must have one timekeeper per round. In addition to this Timekeeping Guide, any students serving as a timekeeper during the National High School Mock Trial Championship must attend an in-person Orientation Session on Thursday, May 18.

Timekeeping Rules

While all mock trial team members should review all mock trial rules and handbooks, there are several rules in the National High School Mock Trial Championship Rules that apply to timekeeping and must be reviewed carefully by timekeepers. These rules include the following:

- Rule 1.4
- Rule 3.3
- Rule 4.5
- Rule 4.6
- Rule 4.7
- Rule 4.12
- Rule 4.20 B
- Rule 4.24
- Rule 6.1 A

Timekeeping Supplies

Please note that no pencils, or clipboards will be available during the competition, so ensure you bring all supplies listed to all rounds of the competition. Be prepared to bring the following:

- Two timing devices: Each timekeeper must use one device for keeping time for the Plaintiff side and one for the Defense side, regardless of what side the timekeeper's team is presenting in a given round. Teams **MUST** use stopwatches, cellular phones or other timing devices to keep time. (This year the host will provide you with two stopwatches that you may use if you choose.)
- Two pencils: Each timekeeper will use a pencil to fill out their timesheets and must have an extra pencil available as a backup. We recommend using mechanical pencils.
- Clipboards (optional): Timekeepers will often be seated in the jury box without a hard surface to write on. The use of clipboards for holding Timekeeping Sheets is often a helpful tool.

***Note: If using a phone, it must be kept in airplane mode and silenced for the duration of the trial. Also, we recommend bringing a backup device, as some courthouses will not allow phones to be brought into the courthouse.**

Supplies Provided by the Host

Please note that teams must use the materials provided to them during their In-Person Timekeeper Orientation. These items must be used as provided and can not be altered in any way.

- A copy of this guide.
- One set of Time Cards: All teams must use the same Time Cards during competition.
- Timekeeping Sheets for each round of competition. Each timekeeper must sign their own Timekeeping Sheet. Both Timekeeping Sheets must be returned to the Presiding Judge at the end of a round of competition before the judges leave the courtroom to fill out their score sheets.

Timekeeper Responsibilities

Each team is responsible for training at least one team member to serve as the team's timekeeper. The timekeeper from each side will work together to ensure accurate time has been kept for both teams. They will each show the Time Cards simultaneously and notify the Presiding Judge when time has expired for any given portion of the trial by showing the STOP time card.

Team members are responsible for being proficient with the information in the National High School Mock Trial Championship Rules and this Timekeeping Guide. The team's timekeeper(s) should be familiar with the trial sequence and have practiced filling out the Timekeeping Sheet before the competition begins. The person(s) serving as the timekeeper(s) must be noted on the team's Roster.

Timekeeping Duties

Before the Trial

1. Include the name of the timekeeper on the team's Roster.
2. Gather timekeeping materials as outlined in the Timekeeping Supplies section of this guide.
3. Enter the courtroom and sit together at the end of the jury box closest to the witness stand (or other appropriate places if no jury box is available). Both timekeepers should sit in a place where team attorneys and the Presiding Judge easily see them.
4. Discuss with your timekeeping partner what auditory or visual cues you will use to determine when to start and stop timing during the round.
5. Enter the round number and team codes in the space provided on the top portion of the Timekeeping Sheet.

6. Arrange stopwatches and Time Cards.

7. Rise when the Presiding and Scoring Judges enter the courtroom and be seated when the Presiding Judge grants permission.

During the Trial

1. Timekeepers work together as a neutral timekeeping team to ensure that time is kept accurately and fairly for both sides during a round.

2. RESET a stopwatch to zero ONLY at the following times:

- At the beginning of each side's opening statement;
- At the beginning of each side's direct examination;
- At the beginning of each side's cross-examination; and,
- At the beginning of each side's closing argument
- DO NOT reset the stopwatch to zero at any other time.

3. DO NOT reset the stopwatch to zero at the following times:

- At the end of direct and cross-examinations (you will need to resume direct examination timing for redirect questioning and cross-examination time for re-cross questioning);
- At the end of Prosecution's closing argument (you will need to resume prosecutions closing argument timing for rebuttal).

4. START timing only when each attorney starts to speak (i.e. when the attorney says the first word of their opening, closing, or examination question).

5. STOP timing during objections, responses to objections, questioning by the judge, and when the attorney says their last word on completing a given task.

6. Remember: DO NOT COUNT TIME...

-when an attorney responds to a Presiding Judge's inquiry as to whether or not the side is ready to proceed, asks for permission to reserve time for a rebuttal, requests for permission to use/move a podium; - from the time the witness is called until they take the witness stand;

-from the time an objection is raised until after the ruling by the Presiding Judge and the examining attorney says the first word to continue the examination; or during this time, a judge may raise questions to a team or the judging panel.

7. Time DOES NOT STOP for the introduction of exhibits or other evidence.

8. Display time cards simultaneously throughout the round to both teams (attorneys and witnesses) and the Presiding Judge only at the intervals set out on the Time Cards

9. Display the STOP card to both teams, the Presiding Judge and the other Scoring Judges.
10. At the end of each trial segment, each timekeeper should record the cumulative time used on the Timekeeping Sheet.
11. At the end of each trial segment, timekeepers should check to make sure both stopwatches for that segment are within 15 seconds of each other. If the stopwatches show a discrepancy of more than 15 seconds, follow the procedures outlined in the Timekeeping Discrepancies section of this guide.
12. After the trial, if either side informs the court that it wishes to file a dispute and a dispute hearing is granted, both timekeepers must time the additional three-minute argument per side.

After the Trial

1. Add your name and signature to the Timekeeping Sheet and turn it into the Presiding Judge before s/he leaves the courtroom.
2. Reset your stopwatches to zero in preparation to time the debriefing.

Disputes at the Conclusion of the Trial

At the conclusion of each trial, the presiding judge must inquire of the teams whether either team believes that a substantial violation of the rules occurred during trial. The competing team members are permitted to consult for a time not to exceed two minutes with the team's coaches before determining whether the team wishes to raise any substantial violations it believes occurred.

If a team believes a dispute occurred one of the student members of one of the competing teams shall state that the team wishes to file a claim that a substantial rules violation occurred (a "dispute"). The presiding judge will provide the student with a dispute form, on which the student will record in writing the nature of the dispute. No more than two minutes per team shall be allotted for this process. The student may communicate with his/her team members and coaches in preparing the form. The team accused of a material rules violation shall have the opportunity to respond in writing. No more than two minutes per team shall be allotted for this process. The student may communicate with her/his team members and coaches in preparing the form. One member of each team shall briefly present the team's position to the presiding judge. No more than two minutes per team shall be allotted for this explanation. The presiding judge shall ask any questions and perform any additional investigation s/he believes appropriate.

After the Recess

Politely remind the judges that both timekeepers will be timing the debrief and that a maximum of 10 minutes is allotted to that portion of the round. Start timing from 10 minutes when the judges begin giving their debrief. Signal the judges following the Time Card from the 5-minute mark. When 10 minutes have passed, timekeepers will hold up the STOP card to politely signal to the judges that the debrief session has ended.

When court is adjourned, timekeepers should help their teams straighten up the courtroom and ensure they have collected all their Timekeeping Materials in preparation for subsequent rounds.

Timekeeping Discrepancies

At the end of each segment of the trial (i.e., at the end of each opening statement, at the end of each direct examination or cross-examination of a witness, and at the end of each closing argument), if there is a timing discrepancy of more than 15 seconds between the two timekeepers, the following rules will apply:

- Any timing discrepancies between timekeepers of 15 seconds or less WILL NOT be considered a timing discrepancy.

If a timing discrepancy of more than 15 seconds has occurred, timekeepers are to notify the Presiding Judge that a timing discrepancy has occurred.

- Timekeepers may raise timing discrepancies ONLY at the end of each phase of the trial presentation as outlined above.
- The Presiding Judge will rule on any timing discrepancy before the trial continues. Timekeepers will synchronize stopwatches to match the Presiding Judge's ruling. For example, if the "P" stopwatch indicates 2 minutes left for "P's" case and the "D" stopwatch indicates time is expired, the Presiding Judge might decide to split the difference in the timing variation and give Beauregard's side 1 minute to conclude. Both sides would adjust timing to allow for the 1-minute timing decision.
- No time disputes will be entertained after the trial concludes.
- The decision of the Presiding Judge regarding the resolution of timing disputes is final.