Rules of the 51st Annual National Trial Competition

Sponsored by:

Texas Young Lawyers Association
and
American College of
Trial Lawyers

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Article I. General

1. The National Trial Competition (NTC) was created to stimulate student interest in developing trial advocacy skills and to encourage law schools to teach trial advocacy skills.

2. The NTC is sponsored by the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) and the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL).

3. Competition Rules.

   A. These competition rules apply to the NTC regional and the national competition.

   B. Requests for interpretation of these rules should be sent in writing to the NTC Coordinator, Bree Trevino, at btrevino@texasbar.com. The TYLA will issue a written response to each inquiry. All participating teams will receive a copy of the question and the response.

   C. The NTC chair(s) and rules sub-committee will interpret these competition rules, and their decisions are final.

   D. Supplemental Rules - The NTC chairs(s) and rules sub-committee may create additional rules to address situations not presently covered by these competition rules.

4. Professional Conduct. The conduct of all participants in the competition, including team members and coaches, will be governed by the standards set out in the ABA-Model Code of Professional Responsibility and the ABA-Model Rules of Professional Conduct. One team competing in the national competition may be awarded with a professionalism award.

Article II. Administration

1. TYLA will administer the regional competitions and the national competition through the NTC chair(s), regional hosts, committees, and other designee(s).

Article III. Teams

1. A team must consist of two or three law students attending the same ABA-accredited law school. For the purpose of these rules, a law student is a person enrolled in law school during the semester or quarter of the regional competition. Only students who are candidates for a J.D. or L.L.B. degree may compete.

2. As directed by TYLA, each team entering the competition must send a registration form and the applicable entry fee to the TYLA's office on or before the deadline. Entries received after the deadline will be accepted only with the written approval of the TYLA and the NTC chair(s).

3. ABA-accredited law schools are limited to a maximum of two teams in the regional competition. Law schools must compete in their respective regions unless otherwise directed by TYLA and the NTC chair(s). TYLA and the NTC chair(s) may reassign schools to different regions.

4. Team members may not be substituted, except for exigent circumstances, such as death, severe illness, or other uncontrollable and unforeseeable circumstances, and two members must participate in each trial. A team must obtain written approval of the TYLA to substitute a team member during or after the regional competition.

5. Teams will be randomly assigned a number prior to the beginning of the regional and national competitions. This will be the sole method of identifying a team during the competitions. Participants and coaches may not divulge the names of their law school directly or indirectly to the judges or witnesses.

Article IV. Competition Problems

1. TYLA will distribute the regional and national competition problems. The problems may include pleadings, witness instructions, witness statements, and other information, discovery, and other appropriate materials.

2. The Federal Rules of Evidence and either the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure will apply to the regional problem and the national problem unless otherwise stated in the problems or otherwise modified by the NTC chair(s). Teams may also argue case law to support their motions and evidentiary issues.

3. All witness statements, depositions, photographs, diagrams, signatures, and other material included as part of the problems shall be deemed as originals and authentic. All documents that appear to have been sent to or by a witness are to be considered as having been sent or received by that witness. However, nothing in this rule precludes the problems from including different instructions.

4. Teams may use only: (1) those exhibits provided in the problem itself; and (2) demonstrative evidence. No other evidence or audiovisual aids will be allowed. If a regional host decides to enlarge two exhibits, the exhibits chosen shall be voted on by the participating schools in the region. Jury instructions may be enlarged as one of the two exhibits, if so chosen by the participating schools. Two exhibits will be enlarged for the national competition. Teams may not enlarge additional exhibits for either the regional competition or the national competition. Teams may mark on enlarged exhibits only if: (1) any marking can be removed easily, e.g., dry erase markers; (2) the team marking on the exhibit is willing, upon request by the opposing team, to erase any markings made; and (3) the marking team agrees not to offer the marked exhibit for admission into evidence.

5. The regional and national problems are copyrighted by the TYLA and may not be used for purposes other than their intended use without the express written consent of the TYLA.

Article V. Regional Competition

1. The TYLA will assign law schools to a particular region and will designate a regional host law school (or co-host). If a law school in a region does not volunteer to serve as the regional host, the TYLA may choose a regional host, or the teams in the region may not be able to compete in a regional competition.

2. Regional hosts, in consultation with TYLA, will determine the dates and place for the regional competition and will notify each participating law school of the selected dates and other relevant information.

3. The regional competition must consist of at least three (3) preliminary rounds. Any exemption to this rule must be approved by TYLA and the NTC Committee Chair(s). The first two rounds will be randomly matched such that each team tries both sides of the case during those rounds. No team from the same school shall face another team from the same school during the first two rounds. If the host decides to include three (3) preliminary rounds, the third round must be power matched. If the host decides to include four (4) preliminary rounds, the third round may be power matched or randomly predetermined, but the fourth preliminary round must be power matched. The seeding for power matching shall be determined as follows: (1) win-loss record; (2) number of ballots won; (3) total point differential; and (4) total points.

4. Following the preliminary rounds, eight (8) teams shall advance to the elimination rounds of the tournament. The advancement and seeding of teams from preliminary rounds to elimination rounds shall be determined as follows: (1) win-loss record, (2) number of ballots won, (3) total point differential, and (4) total points. The first elimination round will be paired as follows:

Semifinal #1	1st Seed	v.	8th Seed
Semifinal #2	4th Seed	v.	5th Seed
Semifinal #3	2nd Seed	v.	7th Seed
Semifinal #4	3rd Seed	v.	6th Seed

5. In the next elimination round, the winner of semifinal #1 will play the winner of semifinal #2, and the winner of semifinal #3 will play the winner of semifinal #4. The winners of those two final rounds will advance to the national competition.

6. Each region may choose to have a "final round" between the two teams that have qualified for the national competition, but it is not required.

7. Two teams from the same law school may not compete directly against one another unless they are the only two teams remaining in the regional competition. In the event two teams from the same school are paired as a result of power-matching or power-protecting, the higher ranked team will maintain its position, and the other team from the same school will trade with the team ranked one below.

8. Each region may determine how witnesses will be supplied for the various regional tournaments. Regions may choose one of the following methods of supplying witnesses for the region, but, in the event competing schools provide witnesses, the witness cannot also be an advocate.

   A. **Option One.** All witnesses are supplied by the regional host. Witnesses made available for each team will be selected by lot from the witness pool.

   B. **Option Two.** Each competing school shall supply two (2) witnesses for each team they have competing in the region. Witnesses made available for each team will be selected by lot from the witness pool. No witness may witness in a trial involving the school from which they come.

   C. **Option Three.** All fact witnesses are supplied by the regional host. Fact witnesses made available for each team will be selected by lot from the witness pool. All expert witnesses will be provided by the teams competing in the region. Expert witnesses will be selected by lot from the expert witness pool. No witness may witness in a trial involving the school from which they come.

9. No witness may sit in the same role for the same team in multiple rounds. In the event competing schools bring witnesses, the witnesses may not sit in a round involving the school from which they come.

10. Regional hosts must supply a bailiff for each trial. Regional hosts may choose to designate any witness in any round to serve as the bailiff.

11. Ballot and Tabulation Transparency

   A. Preliminary Rounds. Regional hosts must make ballots for all preliminary rounds available a reasonable time prior to the commencement of any post-break rounds. A reasonable time requires time for coaches to review the ballots for each of their own school's teams and check the ballots for tabulation errors. Regional hosts may make all ballots for all preliminary rounds available at the same time but are not required to make them available following the completion of each round. Regional hosts must announce the following for the lowest ranking team to qualify for post- break rounds: (1) round wins; (2) ballot wins; (3) point differential; and (4) total points.

   B. Post-break Rounds. For post-break rounds, regional hosts must make available copies of each team's ballots to the respective teams a reasonable time prior to the start of any subsequent round. The ballots from the final round must be made available promptly after the conclusion of the round.

C. Additional Information Regarding Ballot and Tabulation Transparency. Regional hosts are only required to provide ballots of a participating law school to that law school. As an example, if "Team 1" requests copies of ballots, the regional host will provide Team 1 copies of the ballots for rounds in which Team 1 participated. The regional host is not required to provide copies of any other teams' ballots to "Team 1." Regional hosts must make available copies of ballots available for inspection and may make such copies available in any reasonable format in the discretion of the regional host.

12. The top two teams in the regional competition will be invited to participate in the national competition.

13. A Regional Host Handbook and Appendix will be provided to each regional host in order to provide additional guidance for the regional competition.

Article VI. National Competition

1. The national competition will be held in Dallas, Texas on April 8-11, 2026.

2. Teams will argue in four preliminary rounds. TYLA will assign sides and pairings for the first two preliminary rounds. The pairings for the third and fourth preliminary round will be power- matched.

3. Eight (8) teams will advance to the quarterfinal round. Teams will be seeded as follows: 1) win-loss record, 2) number of ballots won, 3) total points differential, and 4) total points. Pairings for the quarterfinal round will be power-protected. The winning teams of the quarterfinal round will advance to the semifinal round; the winning teams of the semifinal round will advance to the final round; and the winning team of the final round will be declared the national champion.

4. Teams from the same law school will not compete directly against one another unless they are the only two remaining teams in the competition. In addition, and to the extent possible, the following circumstances will be considered when pairings are made.

   A. First, the same teams will not compete against each other during the three preliminary rounds. During the advanced rounds, the same teams will not compete against each other on the same side of a case. In other words, if team 1 and team 5 previously competed against each other and 1 was the defense, then 1 and 5 can compete again, but 5 must be the defense.

   B. Second, in those circumstances where a school has two teams at the national competition, teams should not face the second team from a school were the first team saw the same side of the case.

   C. The NTC chair(s) may alter or amend pairings.

5. The TYLA will elect a single method for providing witnesses under Rule 5.5, which method will be communicated to the teams in advance of the National Competition. The TYLA will provide bailiffs for the national competition or elect a witness in each round to act as bailiff.

6. Ballot and Tabulation Transparency

   A. Preliminary Rounds. TYLA will make ballots for all preliminary rounds available a reasonable time prior to the commencement of any post-break rounds. A reasonable time requires time for coaches to review the ballots for each of their own school's teams and check the ballots for tabulation errors. TYLA may make all ballots for all preliminary rounds available at the same time, but is not required to make them available following the completion of each round. In addition, TYLA will announce the following for the lowest ranking team to qualify for post-break rounds: (1) round wins; (2) ballot wins; (3) point differential; and (4) total points.

   B. Post-break Rounds. For post-break rounds, TYLA will make available copies of each team's ballots to the respective teams a reasonable time prior to the start of any subsequent round. The ballots from the final round must be made available to each respective team promptly after the conclusion of the final round of the national competition.

   C. Additional Information Regarding Ballot and Tabulation Transparency. TYLA is only required to provide ballots of a participating law school to that law school. As an example, if "Team 1" requests copies of ballots, TYLA will provide Team 1 copies of the ballots for rounds in which Team 1 participated. TYLA is not required to provide copies of any other teams' ballots to "Team 1." TYLA will make available copies of ballots available for inspection and may make copies available in any reasonable format in the discretion of the regional host.

7. Prior to the start of the national competition and at any point during the national competition, TYLA reserves the right to make changes or additions to the national problem. The participating teams will be furnished copies of changes in advance of the start of the round.

Article VII. Conduct of Trials

1. Two members must participate in each trial. If a team has three members, the third may not sit at counsel table or communicate with the two participating team members during the course of a trial. One team member must make an opening statement and the other team member must make the closing argument. Each team member must conduct one direct examination and one cross examination. The team member conducting a direct examination will make objections to that witness's cross examination, and the team member who cross-examines a witness will make objections to the witness's direct examination. Team members are not allowed to waive any scored portion of the trial.

2. Time Limits

A. Each team will be allocated sixty (60) minutes, exclusive of time spent on motions and objections, to present and argue its case. The burden for the effective use of time is on each team, though witnesses are instructed to be responsive on cross-examination so all teams may utilize their sixty (60) minutes.

B. Each team will be allowed a total of fifteen (15) minutes to confer with its witnesses before the commencement of a trial, referred to as the "woodshed" session.

C. Presentation and argument of pretrial motions shall be limited to a total time of sixteen (16) minutes divided equally between the parties as follows:

(i) the prosecution/plaintiff shall have four (4) minutes to present any pretrial motions;

(ii) the defense shall have four (4) minutes to respond to the prosecution's/plaintiff's motion(s);

(iii) the defense shall have four (4) minutes to present any pretrial motions; and,

(iv) the prosecution/plaintiff shall have four (4) minutes to respond to the defense's motions(s).

D. Teams may make motions after the opening statement, e.g., a motion for a judgment as a matter of law, but the total time for all motions may not exceed five (5) minutes. The presiding judge may call for a limited response.

3. Motions

A. Pretrial

(i) A Motion in Limine may be presented, but it must be made orally and not in writing.

(ii) The presiding judge may rule on any motion(s) or may defer a ruling on the motion(s).

(iii) An oral motion to exclude witnesses or "invoke the rule" may be offered. The presiding judge will rule on the motion, but in no event will any witness or other person be required to actually leave the courtroom.

(iv) Regional hosts or the NTC chair(s), as applicable, may direct all participating schools to make no pretrial motions because of time considerations.

B. During Trial

(i) Either party may move for a motion for judgment as a matter of law and may receive a response to the motion; however, the court must summarily deny the motion in all instances. Time limits are governed by section 7.2(D) above.

4. Witness Testimony

A. Teams must call two witnesses. A witness may be called only by the directing team and may not be recalled by either side. Neither side may call a witness of the other party.

B. Teams may prepare written questions and answers to give to a witness during the woodshed session. All preparation materials must be collected from the witness at the end of the woodshed session. After woodshedding, the teams shall not confer with any witness at any other time for the purposes of preparing testimony with the exception of briefly (60 seconds or less) advising their witness of the effect, if any, of the Court's pretrial rulings prior to opening statements. Advocates must obtain approval from the Court to advise witnesses with regard to pretrial motions.

C. Witnesses may testify as to necessary inferences drawn from the case material on nonmaterial facts, such as a witness' background. Teams must confine their presentations to the facts given in the fact pattern, any matters judicially noticeable under the Federal Rule of Evidence 201, and those inferences that are absolutely necessary, inescapable, and inevitable. An inference is said to be necessary if another and a different inference cannot be reasonably drawn from the facts stated. A necessary inference is NOT any fact that you might wish to be true, nor is it a factual inference that is merely possible or consistent with facts in the fact pattern. For example, if your witness is a police officer, it is a necessary inference that the officer went to and graduated from the police academy. However, it is not a necessary inference that the officer received any specialized training, like training in accident reconstruction.

D. If, during a direct examination, a witness testifies to a material fact not contained in the case materials, the witness may be impeached during cross examination through impeachment by omission. A witness must admit that the fact was suggested by counsel or that the witness him/herself made up the material fact, if true.

E. During cross examination, an advocate may question the witness about non-events that are necessary inferences based on the problem materials. For example, if a police officer witness is testifying and the record is completely silent relating to DNA samples, it is a necessary inference that the police officer witness did not collect DNA samples from the crime scene. In this example, it is permissible to ask the police officer witness "You never collected any DNA samples, correct?" This is permissible because the witness statements are full and complete statements of everything the witness knows. Therefore, the absence of information in the record pertaining to the collection of DNA means DNA was not collected. If a witness is asked on cross examination about the absence of information, the witness must admit that collection or testing was not done. The witness is prohibited from saying "I do not know" or "that was not asked at my deposition." However, teams

may not invent facts or use outside resources in their questions to enhance the cross examination of a witness. For example, if a police officer witness is testifying and the record is completely silent relating to DNA samples, an advocate shall not reference topics outside of the problem materials such as: the reliability of DNA, the scientific theory of DNA, the process of DNA collection, etc. In this example, it is not permissible to ask the police officer witness, "You're aware that margin of error for DNA tests can be as high as five percent, correct?" This is not a necessary inference.

F. The presiding judge may not entertain the objection that a particular question calls for information "outside the scope of the record." An answer to a question is not objectionable on the ground that it is outside the scope of the record.

G. Witnesses may take any materials provided in the problem to the witness stand. In addition, a witness may highlight or underline the materials permitted to be taken to the witness stand but may not write on or otherwise mark those materials, without prior approval from the regional host or the NTC chair(s).

H. Witness shall not intentionally and unreasonably refuse to answer questions during cross examination and may not take any action designed to exhaust the time of the cross-examining advocate's team such as repeatedly asking to be refreshed or shown their deposition or statement. Teams that encourage a witness to violate this rule are subject to sanctions.

I. An advocate may request permission from the presiding judge to conduct a re-cross examination of a witness for the limited purpose of impeachment. The presiding judge may grant or deny the request in his or her discretion. The time taken for re-cross will be deducted from the remaining time of the team conducting the re-cross examination.

J. Competing teams who provide witnesses for the competition are responsible for ensuring the witnesses are prepared and are subject to sanctions if a witness they provided violates the rules or witness guidelines (e.g. unprepared, combative, delaying time, advocating from the stand).

5. Objections

A. Objections must be brief, limited to the legal basis, and applied to the specific facts at issue.

B. Time consumed by objections is not charged against either team; however, the presiding judge may order time charged against any team that makes excessive objections or uses excessive time to argue or respond to objections.

6. Other Trial Information

A. All trials will be conducted as if a jury were present. The presiding judge will make no ruling that precludes the trial from being presented to conclusion.

B. The presiding judge may or may not direct counsel to approach the bench or seek leave of Court before introducing evidence.

C. Teams may elect at the beginning of the proceeding whether they will sit or stand, and advise the judge(s) accordingly. However, no comment should be given as to why one method or the other was chosen.

D. To the extent that a chalkboard or easel is available in the courtroom, these aids may be used. Any writing on such aids may be done only by witness or team members during the trial.

E. Handwritten summaries or charts to be used during a closing argument may not be prepared until after both sides have rested and the evidence is closed. However, materials created while examining a witness during a trial may be used during the closing argument of that same trial.

F. A written charge will be provided to each team. No objection to the jury charge will be considered, and no additional jury instructions will be received from the parties.

G. Prosecution's/plaintiff's closing rebuttal is limited to the scope of defendant's closing.

H. Members of the bench and bar will serve as judges. Each panel should consist of at least two (2) scoring judges, who will evaluate each team's performance using a 100-point scale. Each judge gets one vote, and the decision of a majority of the judges determines the winner of the round. One judge will be designated as the presiding judge.

I. Teams shall not receive advice or assistance from any faculty advisor, supervisor, personnel, alternate team member, or observers between the time a round commences (this includes witness preparation) and concludes. Faculty advisors, supervisor personnel, alternate team members, and observers may not talk to, signal, communicate with, or otherwise coach their teams during the trials.

J. If all courtrooms in the competition are technology enabled, teams may use the technology, except (a) teleprompters or other script-scrolling devices or programs and (b) programs, such as Prezi, that overlay graphics on the same video feed of advocates or witnesses.

7. For purposes of this competition, “demonstrative evidence” includes diagrams, maps, drawings, graphs, charts, presentations, and/or lists that are created before or during the course of the round on a flip chart, marker board, blackboard, and/or some other type of writing surface, and/or simulations or demonstrations performed by the attorneys and/or witnesses during the round.

   A. Teams may use demonstrative evidence created at trial. Teams may also use demonstrative evidence created prior to trial; however, they must provide a copy of the demonstrative evidence to the opposing team, through the bailiff or designee of the regional hosts or NTC chair(s), prior to woodshedding witnesses.

B. Demonstratives created prior to trial may only be created using resources reasonably available to all schools without regard to financial standing. "Reasonably available" resources include, for example, Microsoft Office PowerPoint or other Microsoft Office Suite programs, flip charts, markers, and Post-Its.

C. For purposes of these competitions, demonstrative evidence does not include recreations or models of any physical evidence in the case, and any such recreations or models are impermissible. For example, if the case involves a flashlight, a team may not bring a flashlight with them to competition or create a flashlight to be used during the round. For another example, if the case involves a bag of cocaine, a team may not bring a Ziploc bag filled with sugar to represent a bag of cocaine.

D. For purposes of these competitions, demonstrative evidence does not include measurements of any of the witnesses, or any portion of the witnesses, in the room. Teams are restricted to any measurements listed in the packet and cannot compare them to the actual measurements of the actual live witnesses in the room.

Article VIII. Protests

1. Protest Procedures. Violation of the NTC Rules or Honor Code, if applicable, may subject the offending team to sanctions up to and including disqualification. The spirit of the competition will be considered in determining whether a breach of the rules should result in disqualification from the competition. Taking into consideration that NTC is to be conducted as realistically as possible, the NTC Chair(s) may consider whether a breach of the spirit of the competition would have resulted in a lawyer being held in contempt in an actual trial. If so, the spirit of the competition has been breached and may constitute grounds for disqualification.

2. All protests must be lodged to the regional host or the NTC Chair(s) within five (5) minutes of the conclusion of the trial in question. The conclusion of the trial is measured from the moment closing arguments have concluded. The bailiff is responsible for tracking the five-minute deadline and recording the time the five-minute deadline begins. If the issue of whether the five-minute deadline has expired is raised, the burden is on the protesting team to demonstrate that the protest was lodged to the regional host or the NTC Chair(s) within the five-minute deadline.

3. Protest Procedure - Regional Competition.

   A. At the beginning of each regional competition, the regional host must designate five (5) (or an odd number if less than five) coaches or representatives of the participating schools to serve as the protest committee.

   B. Teams must meet and confer to attempt a resolution before lodging a protest with the regional host.

C. Protests must be lodged with the regional host, who will promptly convene the protest committee. Protest committee members who are coaches or representatives of the law school lodging the protest or of the law school against which the protest is lodged may not participate in deciding the protest. However, every protest must be decided by at least three (3) members of the protest committee.

D. If, by disqualification, unavailability or otherwise, less than three (3) members of the protest committee remain, an additional qualified member or members of the committee will be randomly selected by the regional host. If the regional host is still unable to convene a protest committee, the NTC chair(s) and/or selected NTC committee members will hear and decide the protest as soon as practicable.

E. Protests may be considered and decided according to such procedures and standards as the protest committee may determine, subject to the following guidelines:

i. Protests are not intended to be and should not become part of the competitive process. They are a last resort. Accordingly, protests should be lodged only for an alleged substantial violation of the competition rules and relevant ethical standards.

ii. Since uncertainty and surprise play a large role in many trials, the protest committee should give special weight to the question of whether the protesting team was able, or through the use of resourceful trial techniques should have been able, to neutralize the protested conduct.

iii. Since questionable conduct is often self-defeating, the protest committee should consider whether the scores of the protested round reflected an appropriate penalty for the protested conduct. Similarly, the protest committee may deny a protest on the ground that, due to the disparity in scores, the objectionable conduct did not, or probably did not, affect the result of the protested round. The protest committee may also decline to decide a protest if allowance of the protest would not affect the outcome, that is, the determination of the winners of the regional competition.

iv. The protest committee may consult with the judges of the protested round, the coaches of the involved teams, the team members, and the witnesses in the round in deciding the protest.

v. Protests should be determined as soon as practicable.

vi. The NTC chair(s) or other selected members of the NTC committee may be consulted by a regional protest committee as to any relevant matter including his/her reaction to the substance of the protests which have been resolved by other regions. However, the views of the NTC chair(s) or its designee are not binding on the regional protest committee.

vii. A complete report of all protest committee proceedings must be furnished to the NTC coordinator, Bree Trevino, at btrevino@texasbar.com, within five (5) days of the protest hearing.

viii. Appeal Process. Decisions of a regional protest committee may be appealed to the NTC chair(s). The NTC chair(s) have sole discretion as to whether and how the decision of a regional protest committee will be reviewed or reversed. The NTC chair(s) may reverse the decision of a protest committee only if the decision (a) is manifestly incorrect and (b) affected the outcome of the regional competition. NTC chair(s) may not review or revise the decision of the regional protest committee on the grounds that the regional protest committee was improperly constituted or that different results were reached on the same or similar issues by protest committees in different regions. All decisions of the NTC chair(s) will be final.

4. Protest Procedure - National Competition. Protests at the national competition will be heard and decided by an NTC Protest Committee. Teams must meet and confer to attempt a resolution before lodging a protest with the NTC Protest Committee. The team members, the faculty advisors, and the coaches involved will be given an opportunity to be present and heard at the session in which the alleged violation is considered. In the event a violation is found to have occurred, any penalty will be determined by the NTC chair(s).

5. Sanctions

   A. If the scoring judges are available, indicate to the judges that a breach of the competition rules occurred and that the offending team should be penalized according to the judges' discretion.

   B. If the scoring judges from the round are not present, the protest committee will attempt to contact the scoring judges to exercise sanctions. If the protest committee is unable to reach the scoring judges, the protest committee may penalize the offending team by deducting points from the offending team's ballot in accordance with their discretion. Point deductions should occur in decimal increments to prevent a tie (e.g. 10.5 point deduction)

   C. In addition to a deduction of points, the protest committee may also:

      i. require the offending team to forfeit a ballot;

      ii. require the offending team to forfeit the round; or

      iii. disqualify the offending team from the competition.

6. Severity of Sanctions. The severity of the sanction shall depend on the nature and egregiousness of the violation. Protests under this procedure are not encouraged. Complaints should be limited to substantial violations that are well grounded in fact. All participants are encouraged to act within both the spirit and letter of the competition rules and Honor Code, if applicable.

Article IX. Scouting

1. Faculty advisors, coaches, and team members may only observe their own team and the opposing team in that particular trial. This rule does not apply after a team is eliminated from the competition unless the team is from a school that has a team still in the competition.

2. Participants from any law school that has two teams at a competition must refrain from any discussions of the rounds. This two-team scouting rule does not apply to conversations between members of a specific team or between a coach and a specific team as long as the coach does not discuss in any manner what happened during a round in which the law school's other team participated.

3. While spectators are permitted in any round, spectators should not view trials for purposes of scouting. Accordingly, team members, faculty advisors and coaches should not obtain assistance from or discuss with anyone any trial not involving that team. By competing in NTC, each team member, faculty advisor, and coach specifically agrees that they will not discuss with anyone or receive any information regarding any trial not involving their particular team. This section applies from the beginning of the first preliminary round to the conclusion of the final round. This section does not prohibit any person from raising any issue or concern with the regional host or the NTC Chair(s) and/or committee members.