

NATIONAL TRIAL COMPETITION

Bailiffs' Guidelines & Instructions

Thank you for volunteering to be a bailiff during the National Trial Competition. Your participation helps to make this competition a success! Below are some general guidelines and some instructions that you should follow when serving as a bailiff in the competition.

What is NTC?

The National Trial Competition (NTC) is arguably the most prestigious law school mock trial competition in the nation. NTC was created to stimulate law student interest in developing trial advocacy skills. The competition is co-sponsored by the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) and the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL). Over 300 mock trial teams compete at regional competitions during February and the top two teams from each of the 15 regions advance to the national competition in Texas.

What are my primary responsibilities?

The bailiff is the person who reports any conflicts before the mock trial round begins, signals the beginning of each round, keeps the trial rounds on track by enforcing time limits, and makes sure the scoring ballots are correctly submitted and verified by a competition administrator. In other words, the bailiff plays a very important role during NTC.

REMINDER: No one (including witnesses, bailiffs, and judges) should ask student advocates where they are from, as they are not allowed to disclose this information.

Procedures before the round begins

- First, bailiffs should check in for each round with the TYLA member responsible for bailiffs (the "Bailiff Coordinator").
- At check in, the Bailiff Coordinator will add each bailiff to a group text, which you should use to communicate with the Bailiff Coordinator during rounds.
- You and the witnesses for your round will be assigned a competition courtroom.
- Take the witnesses to the courtroom.
- Before the round begins, it is important that you communicate with the Bailiff Coordinator and confirm there are no conflicts between the student advocates, witnesses and yourself.
 - Confirm there are no conflicts in your courtroom and notify the Bailiff Coordinator via the bailiff group text that either (1) there are no conflicts or (2) a conflict exists and identify your courtroom and the individuals (or team) involved in the conflict.
 - When sending a message in the Bailiff group text, please include your courtroom assignment
- After the initial conflicts check, but before the judges arrive to your courtroom, you will receive a text from the Bailiff Coordinator notifying you that you may begin the woodshedding period.
- The advocates are given a 15-minute woodshedding period. Keep time and alert the advocates when their 15 minutes are up.
- When the judges arrive to your courtroom, you should check again for any conflicts and follow the procedures above to notify the Bailiff Coordinator.
- ***Even if there are no conflicts in your room, do not start the round until you receive a text from the Bailiff Coordinator notifying you that all conflicts are cleared and rounds may begin.***
- Before you start the round, review the Instructions, which you will receive from the judge escort.

If an emergency occurs, such as a missing witness or team, please text or call the Bailiff Coordinator.

Procedures during the round

The bailiff must keep time in accordance with the competition rules. A full version of the competition rules can be found on the TYLA website, www.tyla.org/ntc.

Written Track of Time: Keep written track of the time used by each side for each stage of the trial in the online Status Update Sheet. The only proper way to keep track of the time being used is to keep a written, running tally using the timer on your cell phone. You may use the printed timekeeping sheet to take notes, but all official time must be entered in the Status Update Sheet. As you enter the time spent by each team at each stage of the round the Status Update Sheet will automatically calculate the time remaining for the team.

- **Beginning the Round:** Announce “All arise. “The _____ District Court of Dallas County, state of Lone Star, I now in session, the Honorable Judge _____ presiding. The judges will enter the room and be seated.
- **“Housekeeping” Matters:** The presiding judge will ask the advocates to introduce themselves and present any housekeeping matters. This portion is NOT timed.
- **Pre-trial Motions:** The presiding judge will ask for any pre-trial motions. Presentation and argument of pretrial motions shall be limited to a total time of **16 minutes** divided equally between the parties as follows:
 - (1) the plaintiff shall have 4 minutes to present any motions,
 - (2) the defense shall have 4 minutes to respond,
 - (3) the defense shall have 4 minutes to present any motions, and
 - (4) the plaintiff shall have 4 minutes to respond.
- **Case Presentations:** Each team will have 60 minutes to present and argue its case.
 - **Handling Objections:** Stop your timer during objections; resume your timer after the student advocates address their objection, and the presiding judge makes a ruling.
 - **Handling Re-cross Examination:** A cross-examining advocate may request permission from the judge to re-cross examine a witness. The judge may grant or deny the request in his or her discretion. If the judge grants the request, the time spent on re-cross examination should be deducted from the remaining time for the team conducting the re-cross.
- **Time’s Up:** Stand up to inform each team when they have used their allotted time. During the round, you may also give the teams notice of their remaining time at regular intervals, and upon request by the student advocates.
- **Note End Time:** It is VERY IMPORTANT that you note the time *on the Status Update Sheet* as soon as your round ends. (This time is used to determine whether protests are timely.)

Procedures after the round ends

- **Scoring Period:** At the end of the trial, the presiding judge will ask that the courtroom be cleared so that the judges may fill out the scoring ballots. Mark this time on the Status Update Sheet.
- **Ballot Submission:** The judges will submit their ballots electronically. Please wait in the courtroom until you have confirmation from each judge that they have successfully submitted their electronic ballot. At that time, you will indicate on the Status Update Sheet that all ballots have been submitted.
- **Critique Period:** You may then let the judges know that they may begin critiques while you wait on confirmation that alle ballots have been received by the competition host. **Please remind the judges that their critiques should be limited to 5 minutes or less.**
- **Ballot Verification:** The Bailiff Coordinator will communicate via text when the ballots from your courtroom are received and verified.
- **Release:** After the ballots are verified, you may release the judges and the student advocates.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A BAILIFF!